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Mayor DePeña Takes Control!

After 12 Years of State Receivership, Lawrence is Poised Control of Lawrence Schools

Lawrence Mayor Brian DePeña's senior advisor, Octavian Spanner appeared on the Paying Attention! Podcast at the Studio 21 Podcast Cafe with Harvard's James Carras to talk about the transition of the Lawrence School System from state receivership to local control.

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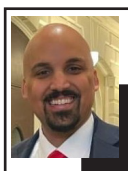
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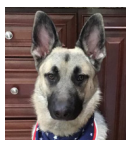
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Valley Patriot of the Month

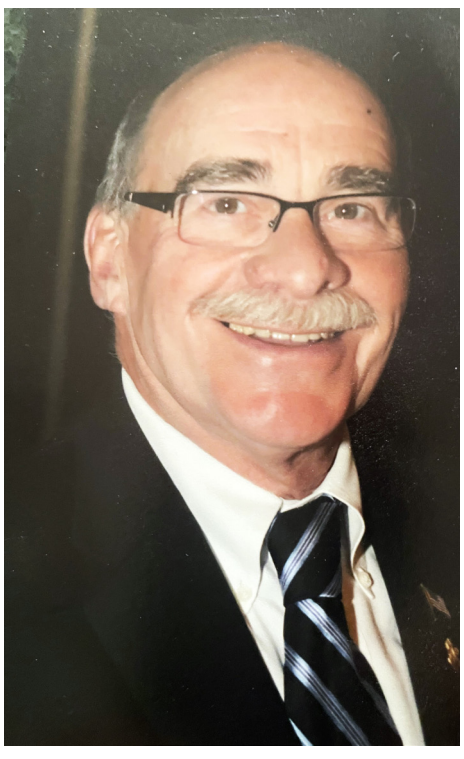
Guy Curtis - Eyewitness to the Air War in Vietnam

John Cuddy
VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

LAWRENCE - Lawrence High School Alum Guy Curtis, Class of 1967, like many incoming Freshmen, wanted to play football for Lawrence High School. His family doctor would not approve him playing high school sports. Five years later, in 1968, the US Air Force cleared him medically for military service in Southeast Asia. After completing US Air Force basic training at Amarillo Air Force Base (AFB) in Texas, Guy attended jet engine mechanic training at Chanute AFB, in Illinois. When he was finished with basic and technical training, he was sent to Thailand, to support the air war against the Communists in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Guy deployed to Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base, around 300 miles north of Bangkok. From 1965 to 1974, the base was the "tip of the spear" in the American air war in Vietnam. During Guy's tour as a jet mechanic at Ubon, he serviced the F-4 McDonnell fighters and the Boeing B-52 Stratofortress bombers of the Seventh Air Force. From 1962 to 1966, the combat operations of the Air Force were conducted by the US Air Force's 2nd Air Division, which scored two "kills" in air-to-air combat against the communists. Starting in 1967, the air war in Southeast Asia was conducted by the Seventh Air Force. The Seventh is credited with the rest of the Air Force's air victories, during the Vietnam war, racking up 135 air- to -air kills, between 1967 and 1975.

US Air Force Aces during the Vietnam conflict are Capt. Charles B. "Chuck" DeBellevue F-4, six victories, Capt. Steve Ritchie F-4, five victories, and Capt. Jeff Feinstein F-4, five victories. During the Vietnam War, two B-52 Bombers also shot down a North Vietnamese MIG-21 fighter jet. The Boeing B-52 is the largest aircraft ever to achieve air-to- air kills! Enlisted US Air Force tail gunners, SSgt. Samuel O. Turner and A1C Albert E. Moore were credited with the two confirmed kills. Three others were claimed by B-52 gunners, but not confirmed by video or



other aircraft. The other combat aircraft at the base, was the Lockheed AC-130 gunship, a US Air Force Special Forces, Ground Attack aircraft. The AC-130 was the only platform of the three types of combat aircraft at the base that Guy could not work on. The AC-130 was powered by a propeller, not a jet engine. Guy was trained on jet engines only, not prop engines.

Guy returned to Thailand during

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Haverhill City Council Admits Violating Open Meeting Law

On June 17th, the Haverhill City Council violated the state's open meeting law by secretly discussing, drafting, finalizing, signing, and circulating a letter declaring that racism is BAD - as if we are all so stupid that we really needed them to tell us that.

What this was really about, was the city council capitalizing on an unproven political allegation against mayoral candidate Scott Wood, to help Councilor Melinda Barrett in her campaign against Wood in the city's mayoral race.

Nowhere in the city charter does it give the Haverhill City Council the authority to interfere with an election, or opine as a body on a campaign issue, nor does it allow them to inject the government body into political matters of the day.

What's worse, is that the council allowed no public debate or input into the matter, there was no public posting that the letter was being constructed as official city business, and there was no transparency as to who had input and influence over the language in the letter that was designed to help the campaign of councilor Barrett.

That's why the publisher of this newspaper filed a complaint with the Attorney General's office alleging they violated the state's open meeting law.

The state's open meeting law clearly states that a majority of any public board is prohibited from discussing any official action in private. That means, for example: if five members of the council are at a fundraiser or a party, they are prohibited from even discussing issues that are, or may become, an official action of the board. It also means a majority of the board cannot use emails, phone calls, or text messages to discuss city business outside of public view.

Clearly that is what happened here.

On August 25th, the city council admitted they had indeed violated the open meeting law, but only after the city attorney publicly stated that they were in violation.

That's when councilors (except Joe Bevilacqua) took turns making excuses for their actions and even claimed that the public desperately needed to know that they "condemn racism."

Seriously.

In fact, Councilor Melissa Lewandowski - an attorney no less - now admits to drafting the letter but claimed she had no clue there was an open meeting law prohibiting this kind of action.

The truth is, Lewandowski had already endorsed Councilor Melinda Barrett for mayor, as did the majority of the city council who illegally signed and circulated this letter against Wood.

This makes it perfectly clear that the council's letter was not about some irrelevant declaration about racism being bad, but was really a conscious effort to use a public government body to interfere in an election by bolstering the campaign of one of their own, Councilor Melinda Barrett.

We find these blatant actions to be a gross abuse of their authority, public funds, resources, and time.

As such, we urge the Massachusetts Attorney General to fine each councilor $1,000 as permitted by law.

We also urge District Attorney Paul Tucker to investigate the council for misuse of public funds, and using a public body to coordinate with a political campaign and engage in "election interference" to bolster the Barrett campaign with their attacks on Scott Wood.

We only hope the voters are all paying attention! ◊

My Efforts to Increase Local Aid for Methuen and Haverhill

Ryan Hamilton
STATE REP., METHUEN/HAVERHILL

This week the House and Senate passed the state budget. This budget provided several wins for Methuen and Haverhill.

The City of Methuen received $71.5 million in state aid. That is an increase of $8 million from last year's budget.

Sixty-five million of that will go to Chapter 70 educational funding for Methuen public schools. $6.5 million will go to unrestricted locally.

Then $300,000 in earmarks will go towards local community projects.

As your representative I secured funding for mental health resources in the Methuen public schools, and funding for improvements at Forest Lake.

Representative Estela Reyes secured money for the Methuen Senior Center, and MVPASAP. Representative Paulino secured money for el Instituto Cultural de Puerto Rico and Olive in July.

State Senator Pavel Payano secured money for the Methuen Arlington neighborhood.

It was a pleasure to work with the entire Methuen delegation to secure record funding for our community and ensure that the City of Methuen received the money it deserved in this budget.

In this year's budget, Haverhill received $94.8 million.

$82.6 million of that went to Chapter 70 educational funding for the Haverhill public schools.

$755,000 are going to local earmarks and $11.8 million is unrestricted locally.

This is a $9 million increase compared to last year's budget.

I was proud to secure funds for the Cogswell Art Centre, and support my colleagues with their local earmarks, such as; improvements in repairs to Gal Park, upgrades to the Riverside Park basketball courts, as well as your marks that went to Somebody Cares, Veterans Northeast Outreach, and the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce.

I am proud to say, Representative Andy Vargas, Senators Barry Fiengold, and Pavel Payano, and I collaborated to deliver record funding to Haverhill.

I want to thank the police and fire departments in Haverhill and Methuen for doing a great job during a national

night out last week. I made it to six events in Haverhill in the City of Methuen. I enjoyed speaking with residents in our local public safety professionals on how I can be helpful to them as a state representative.

Thank you as well to all the residents who planned and hosted these parties. Between the food, the conversations and the live music, it was a delightful night, and I'm already looking forward to next year.

As we enjoy the last weeks of summer, I hope everyone can take some time and enjoy moments with their family and friends.

I'd also like to wish our teachers and students a very prosperous start to the school year in late August or early September.

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Statewide Decisions, Local Impacts: Benefits for Lawrence & Methuen

Francisco Paulino
STATE REP., LAWRENCE/METHUEN

Dear Residents of Lawrence and Methuen,

In our vibrant section of the Commonwealth, Lawrence and Methuen have always stood distinct with their unique cultures, histories, and potentials. As your State Representative, part of my mission is to ensure that statewide appropriations resonate with and uplift the aspirations of both our cities. I'd like to explore deeper into recent investments and how they directly interconnect with our local communities.

Firstly, the statewide commitment of $3.8 Million towards the apprenticeship model is emblematic of Massachusetts' vision for future-forward employment. While this initiative spans the state, for cities like Lawrence and Methuen, it signifies the opening of doors to opportunities in fields like healthcare, tech, and manufacturing. With an evolving job market, this funding is an investment in our local talent, ensuring they're equipped with skills that are both contemporary and competitive.

Another pressing issue faced by many is the challenge of reintegration into the workforce, especially after periods of incarceration. The $2.5 Million for the Workforce Development program is more than just funding—it's a statement. It reaffirms our state's belief in second chances and underscores the importance of community support. As this program unfolds, it offers hope and tangible assistance to individuals in both Lawrence and Methuen, helping them rebuild their lives and contribute positively to our cities.

Amidst the challenges of the pandemic, one thing became abundantly clear: our healthcare workers are true heroes. With this in mind, a considerable $18 Million has been allocated statewide for scholarships for nursing students. For the youth of Methuen and Lawrence, this means an accessible and affordable pathway to join the ranks of these unsung heroes, without the burden of financial strain.

On the broader spectrum, the impressive $107 million dedicated to housing is a testament to Massachusetts' commitment to its residents. Every individual, be it in Lawrence, Methuen, or anywhere else in our state, deserves a safe place to call home. This funding is set to strengthen housing initiatives, ensuring our friends and neighbors have secure and comfortable living environments.

Rehabilitation and inclusivity are central to our statewide vision. With $72.71 million set aside for rehabilitation initiatives and a separate

$9.4 Million for services for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing, we're taking significant steps to ensure every resident feels seen, heard, and valued.

In conclusion, these appropriations, while set at the state level, have deep-rooted implications for Lawrence and Methuen. Every decision made, every dollar allocated, impacts the streets, homes, and hearts of our cities. My commitment remains steadfast—to champion the needs and dreams of our residents at every legislative juncture. Together, we're not only molding the future of Lawrence and Methuen but contributing to the broader progress of the Commonwealth.

Francisco E Paulino is the State Representative (16th Essex District) you can email him at franciscopaulino9@gmail.com.

Kamala Harris Fails in American History

Ken Willette
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

According to Psychology Today, the concept of Groupthink occurs "when a group with a particular agenda makes irrational or problematic decisions because its members value harmony and coherence over accurate analysis and critical evaluation. Individual members of the group are strongly encouraged from any disagreement . . . and [must] set aside their own thoughts and feelings to unquestionably follow the word of the leader."

Vice President Harris is such a blatant figure head of Groupthink that she should be on the lecture circuit before psychologists and social scientists. She is most definitely the supreme projection of current Democratic attack dogs who question every motive, statement, and publication of the opposing Republicans, regardless of the facts or historical accuracy of the source material. In turn, the party of Harris demands complete loyalty to their warped points of view.

Mind you, this is the same Kamala Harris who started to laugh uncontrollably when confronted by the press soon after the disaster of US forces withdrawal from Afghanistan. That was supposed to be a somber moment because of the preventable tragedy of 13 service members who were killed by a suicide bomber.

This is the same VP who visited the border only once as the Border Czar, but who was able to claim expertly that there was no border crisis. The same brilliant mind whose summation of geopolitics involved saying that Ukraine is a small nation, Russian is a big nation, and sometimes the big nation in the neighborhood attacks the small nation.

Harris has been in perpetual campaign mode since Inauguration Day, as evidenced by her total hatchet job condemning the history curriculum of the State of Florida. She must be the most intellectually devoid VP ever. She gives a propaganda speech proclaiming that because the curriculum is teaching that slaves acquired skills during their enslavement, the instruction material must endorse the benefits of slavery. Huh?

Set aside the fact that the co-chair of the curriculum committee is an African American. Any AP American History student will agree to the following lesson. Frederick Douglass learned to read despite a law banning anyone from teaching slaves to read. He also learned ship making skills in Baltimore. When Douglass escaped from slavery to Massachusetts, his ship industry skills, despite constant discrimination from his co-workers, enabled him to survive in New Bedford. His capacity to read empowered him to rail against the evils of slavery, and he emerged as an internationally recognized abolition advocate.

I thought these were immutable historical facts. Why can't we celebrate his life journey without faux Leftist outrage and interference? Nowhere does the curriculum favor the vile and dehumanizing institution of slavery, nor does it establish any positive assessment of slave owners.

Harris doesn't want people to really delve into the oppression of slaves before, during and after the Civil War. As a national leader in her party, she would be embarrassed and ashamed if she had any semblance of historical knowledge.

Considering Democratic legislation being filed in 2023 calling for reparations, Harris doesn't want to give a speech on Democratic President Andrew Johnson rescinding Field Order 15, which was issued by General Sherman. Order 15 authorized 400,000 acres in confiscated Confederate plantation land be distributed to former slaves--- in the hopes that they could improve their lives in the face of still intolerable racism in the post-Civil War South.

Former slaves were initially granted 40 acres, and some procured a government mule. This was to serve as a sweeping model, which was overwhelmingly supported by Radical Republicans in Congress. Not only did Johnson issue an executive order dismantling reparations, but he also vetoed approved legislation on the subject.

As a direct result, many freed slaves were forced to work as sharecroppers for their former masters. They barely survived and were subjected to many cruel whims of their former captors. The ownership possibilities envisioned under Order 15 were destroyed forever.

Harris won't be highlighting the platform of the Copperhead Democratic Party during the 1864 election. Despite the watershed Union victory at Gettysburg, the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation and the withdrawal of any European support for the Confederacy, the Copperheads called for peace negotiations with the South. If Democratic nominee George McClellan ended up winning the White House, the likely result would have been a cessation of the war, a permanent breakup of the Union and the preservation of slavery.

Even though over 250,000 combatants were killed entering 1864, Union soldiers in the field played a pivotal role in re-electing Abraham Lincoln, because a McClellan Presidency would have erased all their noble efforts. While many knew that voting for Lincoln could turn them into future casualties in the field of battle, they nevertheless courageously made the right choice.

Harris might shy away from the legacy of Democrat Woodrow Wilson, who advanced the principles of democracy abroad, while hypocritically segregating the federal workforce on the home front.

As president, Wilson hosted a screening of Birth of a Nation, arguably the most racist and virulent film ever made. In fact, the film served as a highly successful recruitment tool for the KKK, with its agenda of hate against African Americans, Jews, Catholics, and many new immigrants.

What is pathetic about this current VP is that she engages in a scourged earth mindset against any perceived opponents. At least Al Gore worked on reinventing government initiatives. George Hebert Walker Bush brought his foreign policy expertise to aid Reagan.

Someone will really have to tell me what Harris does beyond delivering disproven, divisive rhetoric. ◊

Securing $615,000 for 14th Essex District

State Legislature Passes $56.2 billion FY24 Budget

Adrianne Ramos
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

BOSTON – State Representative Adrianne Ramos (D-North Andover) is delighted to announce the passage of the Massachusetts State Budget for Fiscal Year 2024. After extensive deliberations and collaborative efforts, the Legislature has approved a forward-thinking budget that aims to foster growth, invest in vital services, and promote prosperity for all residents of the Commonwealth.

The FY24 budget represents a major step forward for Massachusetts. Some notable highlights include:

• Governor Healey's MassReconnect initiative which provides tuition equity and free community college for nursing students & students 25 & older.

• A commitment to early education and childcare, awarding over $500 million to special education initiatives, and ensuring that universal free school meals are provided permanently.

• 90% of regional school transportation reimbursements that offer numerous benefits, including improving environmental sustainability. These investments will contribute to safety improvements, disaster resilience, collaborative regional planning, and long-term government cost savings.

• A significant influx of funding into the MBTA generated from Fair Share Amendment revenue.

• No cost calls for incarcerated individuals in state prisons and county jails to ensure those incarcerated, and their loved ones, can sustain healthy communication.

• Language that allows pharmacists to prescribe and dispense hormonal contraceptives.

Further, in collaboration with Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester), Sen. Barry Finegold (D-Andover), Rep. Tram Nguyen (D-Andover), and Rep. Dawne Shand (D-Newburyport), Rep. Ramos is proudly bringing back $615,000 in funding for 14th Essex projects and initiatives. Highlights include $100,000 for Boxford's culvert replacement project, $75,000 for the Cashman School Playground in Amesbury, $55,000 for the North Andover Senior Center, $45,000 for Groveland's Johnson Creek Dam restoration project; and $125,000 for Our Neighbor's Table.

"I want to thank Speaker Mariano, Chair Michlewitz, and all the budget conferees, legislators, and the public for their valuable contributions during the budgetary process. This collective effort has allowed us to draft a budget that reflects Massachusetts citizens' diverse needs and aspirations," said Rep. Ramos.

With the passage of the budget, we reaffirm our commitment to responsible governance and envision a brighter future for Massachusetts. Together, we will navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, building a stronger and more prosperous state for generations to come.

The bill, having passed both the Senate and the House of Representatives, is on the Governor's desk for her consideration and signature.

You can email Rep. Ramos' office at samantha.kelley@mahouse.gov ◊

State Budget Includes Local Funding for the Valley

Pavel Payano
STATE SENATOR, 1ST ESSEX DISTRICT

Last week, an important milestone was achieved as the Legislature enacted a comprehensive $56.2 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24). The budget represents a successful reconciliation of differences between the versions passed by the House of Representatives and Senate earlier this year. This year's FY24 budget outlines unprecedented levels of investment in critical areas such as education, housing, regional transportation, health care, and workforce development. These strategic investments reflect our commitment to fostering economic growth, enhancing affordability, inclusivity, and competitiveness throughout the state of Massachusetts.

The FY24 budget marks a significant increase of $3.8 billion compared to the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Budget. This responsible spending recommendation aligns with a tax revenue estimate of $40.41 billion for FY24, showcasing a steady 1.6 percent growth. Additionally, the budget benefits from an additional $1 billion generated by the new Fair Share surtax, as agreed upon during the consensus revenue process in January. These measures reflect our commitment to fiscal prudence while ensuring vital resources are available to address the needs of our state and its residents.

Remaining steadfast in our commitment to sound fiscal management, the FY24 budget demonstrates disciplined financial practices by bolstering reserves for the state's stabilization fund. Currently standing at a record high of $7.16 billion, this fund is projected to reach an impressive $9.5 billion by the close of FY24. These robust reserves will serve as a safeguard, providing the Commonwealth with the necessary resources to uphold fiscal responsibility and navigate through potential economic uncertainties in the future. We prioritize prudence to ensure a stable and resilient financial outlook for Massachusetts during times of ongoing economic volatility.

LOCAL PROJECTS

Collaborating closely with the Haverhill, Lawrence, and Methuen State Delegation, we successfully advocated for vital local projects. Our unified efforts have resulted in securing $1.775 million in funding for various critical initiatives. Specifically, in Haverhill, we have ensured funding for essential workforce development programs, community engagement efforts, and initiatives aimed at combating food insecurity. In Lawrence, we stand behind crucial endeavors like establishing an acute care clinic at the former Dyeworks building and supporting housing and food security programs. Additionally, in Methuen, we are bolstering entrepreneurial opportunities in the Arlington neighborhood through MAN Inc, while also providing much-needed support to the Methuen Senior Center.

SELECTION OF IMPACTFUL LOCAL PROJECTS

• $125,000 to the GLFHC to address unmet acute patient health needs at a satellite clinic at the former DyeWorks building

• $50,000 to support MakeIt Haverhill and their workforce development programs.

• $50,000 for Haverhill Promise to help expand their efforts to ensure grade-level reading for Haverhill students.

• $120,000 for MAN, Inc. to increase and enhance entrepreneurship, neighborhood investment & revitalization in the Methuen Arlington neighborhood

• $25,000 for improvements at Methuen's Forest Lake.

• $50,000 to International Veterans Care Services to mitigate food insecurity, provide housing relief to members of the veteran community.

• $25,000 for Three Saints, Inc. to support community services and promote Italian heritage.

• $40,000 for Debbie's Treasure Chest to provide aid and support to disadvantaged and at-risk families.

• $20,000 – for Somebody Cares New England to support their efforts in addressing food insecurity.

FAIR SHARE INVESTMENTS

Aligned with the January consensus revenue agreement that was reached with the Healey-Driscoll Administration, the FY24 budget includes $1 billion in revenues generated from the Fair Share ballot initiative, which was approved by voters in November 2022.

This initiative introduced a new surtax of four percent on annual income above $1 million, with the intention of utilizing these funds to enhance the state's education and transportation sectors. To uphold transparency and accountability, the FY24 budget establishes an Education and Transportation Fund, dedicated to tracking and managing Fair Share revenues in a clear and open manner. This ensures that the public is well-informed about the collection and allocation of these new funds, facilitating their meaningful impact on improving public education and transportation systems, in line with the principles outlined in the ballot initiative.

EDUCATION - FREE UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS - $171.5 million will allow all public schools to provide universal school meals to all students free of charge, making Massachusetts the seventh state in the country to make the program permanent. According to the Feed Kids Campaign, 56,000 additional children ate school lunch daily in

October 2022 compared to October 2019 as a result of this program.

INCREASING FUNDS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS - The FY24 budget demonstrates our unwavering commitment to K-12 education through the fulfillment of the Student Opportunity Act (SOA). The primary goal of the SOA is to ensure that all students in Massachusetts have access to a quality education, regardless of their zip code or socioeconomic background. It seeks to address educational inequities and provide additional resources and support to schools and districts that serve a higher proportion of low-income students and English language learners.

We have invested $6.59 billion in Chapter 70 funding, marking an impressive increase of $604 million from FY 2023. Moreover, we have doubled the minimum Chapter 70 aid from $30 to $60 per pupil, providing vital financial support to our schools.

Our ongoing dedication to implementing the Student Opportunity Act by FY2027 ensures that all

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Methuen Taxpayers Should Be Angry Over Gallant Decision

(prestando attencione!)
PAYING ATTENTION!
with Tom Duggan

Just minutes after posting the story online about Methuen Police Captain Greg Gallant (story on opposite page) winning his Civil Service case against the City of Methuen for wrongful termination, the hate mail started pouring in.

People were outraged, they were confused, and they were hostile. How could this be, many asked. How did Gallant get away with so many crimes and then get put back on the job? Clearly this was a travesty of justice, the ignorant and uninformed wrote.

Well, I am going to tell you something that's very unpopular, something you probably do not want to hear.

But it needs to be said.

The ruling was sound. The accusations were bogus from day one. The media propaganda against Gallant were calculated and coordinated between members of the Methuen City Council and the mayor's office. In short, you were sold a bill of goods. That's a fact. It's not a pretty fact and it's not what people want to believe, but it's the truth nonetheless.

From day one of the fake political scandal that was shoved down the throats of Methuen taxpayers, it was designed to do two things: deflect blame from elected officials who lied to the voters about the contents of the contract, and to scapegoat the union president who negotiated the contract.

Here are the facts as laid out by the Civil Service Commission:

Methuen Police Captain Greg Gallant negotiated with the city and made multiple proposed changes to the contract, as all contract negotiators do.

ALL OF THEM.

Because the superiors had taken a bath on previous contracts and had educational incentives and other benefits taken out of their base pay, Gallant sought to get those benefits put back in the contract as part of base pay. He then proposed a 0% raise the first year, and a 2% raise for year two and three (on top of the base).

The final proposed revisions were well ADMITTEDLY known to City AUDITOR? Tom Kelley. They were well known by members of the city council. They were well known by the mayor's office, and they were well known by the city's attorneys.

All of that has been established as fact and are not in dispute.

Yet they all lied to the public and pretended Gallant "snuck" these provisions into the contract in the dead of night, forcing everyone to sign it without knowing what was in it.

It's also a fact that Mayor Perry and the city council have since signed a new contract with the superior officers that is more than the Gallant contract they publicly called "criminal".

They even created a brand-new position of Deputy Chief that pays $221,241 in the first year. We all know that as the next few years go by, that $221K will grow to $300K and more - well more than what former Chief Solomon was making.

So, the mayor and councilors wanted you to believe in 2022 that a police chief is not worth $300K. But in 2023 a brand-new Deputy Chief's position that never existed IS worth upwards of $300K. That's on top of the other three superior officers' jobs they just added to the ranks last year. And you all fell for all of it.

So did the rest of the media, who jumped all over this Gallant story without doing any homework at all, and ran with the storyline of cops making three quarters of a million dollars, (which also wasn't true) fudging contracts, and committing crimes.

And why not? It's a much juicier story than a bunch of politicians not doing their jobs and lying to the public. Hell, that happens every day around here.

Besides, cops running rogue and stealing money from the taxpayers sells way more newspapers, radio advertising, and TV commercials.

Here's just one passage from the Civil Service Commission's ruling:

"Captain Gallant also placed his calculation formula where the mayor was most likely to see it— on the same page as, and immediately after, the new '0,2,2' language that the mayor had requested."

If Gallant was trying so hard to "sneak in illegal raises" he would have buried the new language in the middle of the document where nobody would notice it. But he didn't.

The problem with political narratives that sound juicy and explosive is that people are so willing to believe them.

People just ignorantly jumped on the bandwagon and ran around the community vilifying Gallant (and others) over what was being called a "criminal contract", complete with bogus salary numbers, and a plethora of other bogus charges just to muddy the water.

YES, Methuen voters have every right to be angry and outraged by what happened here. It IS their money!

But they shouldn't be mad at Greg Gallant, or the police superior officers, they should be furious at the corrupt and dishonest politicians who continuously lie about this issue long after the truth was established. They should also be mad at the media who just repeated those lies to sell a good story and make more money.

Gallant is now set to get a really nice payday and be put back to work on the Methuen Police Department. And no matter what Civil Service says, some people will continue to believe this is a travesty of justice.

But if you read the ruling for yourself (on the Valley Patriot website), you will see who was really lying. Civil Service looked at ALL the evidence, not just the one sided story told by the media. They examined all the documents, and objectively heard testimony from witnesses on both sides of this argument. The truth is, the evidence showed it was Methuen officials lying, not Captain Gallant.

If you elect better leaders, stop swallowing what the media and political hacks feed you, and think for yourself instead of jumping on a bandwagon without all the facts, things like this won't happen - and the taxpayer won't be footing the bill for the next Greg Gallant.

But all of that's is up to you.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TRIAL COURT
SUPERIOR COURT DEPARTMENT

ESSEX, ss Case No. 2377CV00379

JANE A. HOLDEN, TRAVIS SCOTT, and HILLARY GOODHUE
v.
HEIRS, DEVISEES AND LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES OF OTIS K. PEABODY, et al.

NOTICE OF HEARING

TO: The Heirs, Devisees and Legal Representatives of: Otis K. Peabody, Alice Jane Peabody, Lillian P. Paine, Willard J. Packer, Clara A. Packer, Clayton D. Farrar, and Mary A. Farrar

You are hereby notified that a hearing has been scheduled for September 19, 2023 at 2:00 PM at the Essex County Superior Court – Salem, J. Michael Ruane Judicial Center, 56 Federal Street, Salem, MA 01970 (Civil A, 5th Fl, Courtroom H) on Plaintiffs' Motion for Entry of Default Judgment in the above captioned cased. Plaintiffs filed their Motion for Entry of Default Judgment on July 19, 2023 seeking declaratory relief concerning title to the vacant lot described in the deed recorded with the Essex County (South) Registry of Deeds in Book 41406, Page 461, and shown as Lot 16-20A on the Groveland Assessor's Map.

This Notice of Hearing is provided pursuant to the Notice to Appear for Motion Hearing issued by the Essex County Superior Court on July 21, 2023. Failure to appear may result in judgment by default against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

Dated: July 24, 2023
Plaintiffs, Jane A. Holden, Travis Scott, and Hillary Goodhue
By their attorneys,
_/s/ Kaleena Machado _____

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Andover, MA 01810
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Dr. John Armano is pleased to announce the opening of Stadium Chiropractic PC located at 2 Durso Ave in Lawrence, adjacent to the Registry of Motor Vehicles behind Taco Bell. Dr. John Armano has been serving the Merrimack Valley for the past 31 years specializing in injury rehab sports medicine, as well as pain management for acute and chronic conditions. Dr. Cindy Armano has been serving Boston's North shore for the past 31 years also specializing in injury rehab, as well as family care and nutritional counseling. PHONE: (508) 350-7036. Se Habla Espanol.

Captain Gallant Wins Civil Service Case, City Must Return Him to Duty, Give Back Pay

The Massachusetts Civil Service Commission has ruled that fired Methuen police Captain Greg Gallant must be returned to duty and given three years back pay after being illegally fired by Methuen Mayor Neil Perry.

[FULL RULING ON THE VALLEY PATRIOT WEBSITE: Gallant v. Methuen, CS-22-388]

Gallant was officially fired on June 9, 2022 after being put on leave in connection with his role in the police superior officer's contract that members of the Methuen Council called "criminal".

Gallant was the President of the Methuen Police Superior Officers' Union at the time. Subsequently the mayor and council have approved police contracts for almost the same amount of money (or more) than the original contract they called "criminal."

Gallant was initially accused of hiding language in the contract that was not approved during the initial negotiations with then-Mayor Steve Zanni.

He was also accused of pushing two different contracts with two different pay scales.

On this note the Commission found:

"The primary theory underlying the city's termination of Captain Gallant is that his eleventh-hour revisions to the CBA were dishonest. The crux of the accusation is that Captain Gallant intended to trick the city's bargaining team by concealing his edits—really, his calculation formula—from them. I find that this was not Captain Gallant's intention. Although he made his edits very late in the day, Captain Gallant anticipated that the city's bargaining team would see and consider those edits."

The commission further found:

"Captain Gallant testified credibly that he expected the city's bargaining team to read and consider his revised draft of the CBA. That expectation was natural. The mayor and the city solicitor were duty-bound to review the final copy of the CBA before its execution. Captain Gallant also placed his calculation formula where the mayor was most likely to see it— on the same page as, and immediately after, the new "0,2,2" language that the mayor had requested."

Gallant complained at the time that the city was "retaliating" against him for his union activities which is prohibited by law.

Gallant said at the time that his frustration with members of the city council could cost the city more money.

"Councilor McCarty has made defamatory statement where he continues specifically to state that there was a criminal conspiracy and criminal activity taking place during the negotiation of the 2017 contract negotiations. These are statements he must know are not true or he should know they are not true. There were never two different contracts with different language to deceive anyone or conspire to commit a crime. We do have a civil attorney at this point gathering information."

Gallant added at the time, that there may be separate suits as the result and promised a wrongful termination and slander suit against individual councilors acting "outside the scope of their authority."

GALLANT VINDICATED

Reached by phone the day of the decision, Gallant said he just wanted to get back to work and was unsure if there would be any additional suits.

"I don't know what I am going to do next," Gallant told the Valley Patriot in an exclusive interview.

"I just want to thank my family and those who stood by me during all of this. I know I didn't do anything wrong, and it feels good to finally be vindicated after all the things that have been erroneously reported to the public. I'm looking forward to moving on with my life, my family has been through a lot."

Gallant also said that after his firing he had obtained a security job but was fired after his new employer Googled his name and found out about the city's actions against him.

METHUEN'S HYPOCRISY

Gallant's attorney Jim Simpson said that there seemed to be a bit of hypocrisy on the part of city officials after approving a new contract last year that was nearly the same as what Gallant had been fired for.

"The most recent contract they approved was pretty much what they approved three years ago. They complained all along about insane pay increases in the contract Gallant was negotiating for the superiors, but then a year later the city gives them more."

Attorney Simpson added "Greg has had to be quiet over the last three years. He's feeling vindicated because up until now, people have only heard one side of the story. It's good to have someone objective hear all the facts of the case."

ACCUSATIONS OF SOLOMON'S COMPLICITY

As for Mayor Perry and the City Council's assertion that Gallant was trying to "hide" additional language in the contract the commission ruled:

"The charge that Captain Gallant attempted to hide his edits from the city's bargaining team runs aground on the reality that, in Captain Gallant's presence, city negotiator Chief Solomon in fact examined those edits. By way of a fallback argument, the city suggests that Captain Gallant hoped to obscure his revisions from other city bargainers; the city posits that Captain Gallant suspected that Chief Solomon would not zealously defend the city's interests, because Chief Solomon's own compensation was derived from the superior officers' pay. This fallback theory is not supported by a preponderance of the record evidence."

The ruling still has to be voted on by the entire Civil Service Commission, but Simpson said that this is usually a formality.

The City of Methuen can appeal the decision of the Civil Service Commission, but that appeal can only consider whether there were any errors of law in the decision. ◊

Eunice Ziegler Running for Open Governor's Council Seat

Methuen City Council Chair Eunice Zeigler launched her campaign to be the Fifth District's next Governor's Councilor.

She enters the race with the encouragement of outgoing Governor's Councilor Eileen Duff.

"I want to thank Governor's Councilor Eileen Duff for her dedicated service to the people of the Fifth District over the past ten years. I'm grateful for her strong leadership toward creating a more fair and equitable justice system in Massachusetts. This effort must continue.

I'm running for Governor's Council because I believe I would offer a unique perspective to the body that decides who our judges will be, who sits on our Parole Board, and who receives commutations and pardons. I'm not a lawyer, and I have no conflicts of interest. What I bring to the table is the ability to represent all our district's residents, including historically marginalized communities.

While the current members of the Governor's Council have made tremendous progress, there is so much more to be done. I will work tirelessly for and with the people of the Fifth District to advance efforts to fulfill the promise of equality in our Commonwealth's justice system." Eunice Zeigler, a proud first-generation Haitian American, is a product of the Methuen Public Schools. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Master of Arts in Economic and Social Development of Regions degrees from the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Chair Zeigler has served as a member of the Methuen City Council since 2018, and she has held roles with the City of Haverhill and the Lowell Housing Authority. She currently leads the Office of Advancement at the YWCA Northeastern Massachusetts in Lawrence.

Lawrence Exchange Club/F.H. Cann Awards $22K in Scholarships to Local Students

The Lawrence Exchange Club held their annual scholarship night last monoth and gave out a total of $22,000 to local students ($20k by given by Exchange, $2k donated by FH Cann). $15k was also given to high school students entering college, and $7,000 to middle school students entering private high school.

Pictured above are: Chanelle Pichardo from Notre Dame Cristo Rey, $1,000 received the Hart Memorial scholarhsip, and is attending Providence College. Erianna Valverde from Greater Lawrence Tech, $1,000 received the Hart Memorial scholarhsip, and is attending UMASS Lowell. Alexander Martinez from Lawrence High $1,000 received the the FHCann scholarhsip, and is attending Boston University, Malachi Carberry Johns from Phillips Exeter (lives in Lawrence) $1,000 received the Hart Memorial scholarhsip, and is attending Wesleyan University. Vidaly DeLaCruz from Greater Lawrence Tech., $1,000 received the Hart Memorial scholarhsip, and is attending Umass Dartmouth. Luis Del Rosario from Greater Lawrence Tech $2,000 received the A.C.E Award (2k) scholarhsip, and is attending UMASS Lowell. Ava Keamy from North Andover High $2,000 received the Alison Hawkes Memorial scholarhsip, and is attending Merrimack College. Emely Ruano from Lawrence High $1,000 received the Hart Memorial scholarhsip, and is attending Umass Lowell. Julio Mejia from Nortre Dame Cristo Rey $1,000 received the Hart Memorial scholarhsip, and is attending Bentley University. Danny Tran from Lawrence High $1,000 received the FHCann scholarhsip, and is attending Harvey Mudd College Coleen Suriaga from Andover High $1,000 received the Hart Memorial scholarhsip, and is attending Northeastern. *Not pictured but also receiving scholarships were*: Amanda Kim, Lina Li, Chanti Chunilal-Cuevas, Nick Ramos, Rodolfo Caceres, Leonardo Caceres, Daniel Monterroso, Dejalise Calderon, Rainel Lopez, Luis Nunez, Emyll Acosta, Sandy Gabin, Athaniel Urena, Grace Mazara, Penelope Vargas, and Nathaniel Pichardo.

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Who's Stalling Public Records Release in Dracut?

EYE ON DRACUT

By Brian Genest
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

The clock is ticking and the legal bills are piling up at Dracut Town Hall over a request for public records about Tony Archinski. In addition to already being a far-too-expensive and far-too-lengthy process, it's also incredibly suspicious, based on the circumstances. If justice delayed is justice denied, in this case, justice has apparently been discarded.

In January of 2022, town resident Kevin O'Brien submitted a public records request asking for documents related to Archinski's employment as a town police officer. In response, O'Brien got hundreds of pages of documents, which he published online and provided to the media and producers of television shows at Dracut Access Television, including Eye On Dracut. Among the public records released from Archinski's file were internal investigations, disciplinary actions, settlement agreements and other documents.

Many of the released documents included redacted information. Information about a half-dozen items was completely withheld.

O'Brien appealed the town's decision to redact and withhold the information to the state's public records keeper. The town was ordered to provide all documents in unredacted form, except for the names of victims and other personal information, but their release has been delayed for months and months. O'Brien came to the July Board of Selectmen's meeting and asked why it's taking so long for the town to produce the public documents he's legally entitled to receive.

It's a great question, considering he's been waiting a year and a half. Here's some other questions taxpayers should be asking: Why is this public records request being treated differently than all the others before it and after it? Why has it taken so long to produce these public records? Why has it cost the town more than $10,000 in legal fees? Who is responsible for running up the legal bills over this matter? Why hasn't the town complied with two orders from the secretary of state and released the documents in a timely manner?

Could it be that the documents are being withheld because they don't make Archinski look very good, to put it mildly? Some of the Archinski documents previously released were about two disciplinary issues: violating the police department's shotgun policy and what is referred to as "The Lo Kai incident," where Archinski failed to properly handle an assault and battery.

As a result of the shotgun policy violation in 2004, Archinski received a two-day suspension without pay for insubordination and violating the general orders of the Dracut Police Department. The internal investigation report questioned Archinski's truthfulness.

Also in 2004, as a result of the "Lo Kai incident," Archinski received a two-day suspension without pay for failing to properly handle an assault and battery while working a paid police detail. The internal investigation found four of the allegations in the citizen complaint to either be unfounded or unsustained because of inadequate evidence. However, investigators found the fifth allegation—that Archinski failed to provide any type of medical assistance to the victim of an assault and battery after they had suffered obvious physical injuries—to be valid and supported by sufficient evidence.

In their report, investigators said, "Quite simply put, there was little if any action taken. Lt. Archinski's failure to address the following constitutes a failure to act appropriately as a police officer in this situation." The report lists seven issues, including never identifying the suspects or witnesses at the scene, never submitting a report documenting what he observed, never informing police department personnel after his detail was completed that a fight occurred and not taking any type of police action in

response to an assault and battery that occurred in his presence.

Investigators said Archinski's actions demonstrated a total lack of effort to investigate the incident that occurred. "The investigators have concluded that there can be only two reasons for his failure to act. Either he had a desire to protect one or more of the participants from some type of future judicial sanction, or he just simply took a laissez-faire attitude and chose to do nothing in an attempt to shirk work responsibilities," the report said.

Investigators concluded: "…there is strong and convincing evidence which rises above the threshold of the preponderance of the evidence standard that indicates Lt. Archinski was not truthful when he answered questions

DRACUT: PAGE 18

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KANE
VALLEY PATRIOT MASCOT/COLUMNIST

KANE'S KORNER

Kane knows it is a dream of many families in the Merrimack Valley to own a home. There are so many hard-working people that work full time that are priced out of homeownership due to the astronomical price of real estate. The Executive Director of Bread & Roses Housing INC, Annmary Connor, takes pride in her organization's mission of bringing homeownership opportunities to the gainfully employed residents of her community. Annmary explained that some of her residents work in the local grocery stores, in retail, and healthcare such as Certified Nurses Assistants.

According to Annmary, Bread & Roses Housing currently has 49 built or rehabilitated homes in their inventory that are pridefully owned by 49 working families. Kane thought wow, that is quite an accomplishment.

Kane asked, "please spill the tea Annmary how? What is the secret?" Annmary said, "the secret is utilizing a Community Land Trust." Kane asked Annmary how does that work? Annmary explained to Kane that for the past 35 years Bread and Roses Housing has built or renovated existing homes where the organization retains ownership of the land, while the resident secures a mortgage for the home on the land owned by Bread & Roses Housing.

In fact, the contract reads the land is owned by Bread & Roses Housing for 99 years promoting generational wealth. Many participants of the program are first generation citizens, and the demographics represent the urban community. According to Annmary participants are all families of at least three people. A family may consist of a single parent and two children or a multigenerational family consisting of a grandparent, parent, and child. The household average income is $60,000. Annmary informed Kane that Bread & Roses Housing was first developed in 1987 by women volunteering at a food pantry and recognized the need for housing within the working poor population.

Kane asked, "How are families selected?" Annmary explained that families from the waiting list are required to be gainfully employed, have a positive credit score, and motivated to maintain their home and property. Resident owners are required to place a down payment on the home of 3%, a small portion of that can be gifted and the remaining 17% of the down payment can be from a second mortgage, awarded by Bread and Roses Housing. The remainder of the mortgage is secured from a local bank. Annmary explained to Kane if an owner would like to sell their home, Bread & Roses Housing has the first opportunity to buy the property so they may allow the next person on their waiting list to secure the opportunity of home ownership. Kane learned from Annmary that the current waiting list has 150 people waiting.

Kane was curious how the home ownership road to self- sufficiency was paid for in general. Annmary said the communities served by the program including local city halls have a vested interest in the program success. According to Annmary, the program is funded through on-going rigorous grant writing and community donations. Besides securing funding for parcels of land, the organization has operating costs associated with land ownership and employment. In fact, if you would like to donate to the program, please visit the website at www.brhousing.org.

Kane found Annmary's enthusiasm and dedication to be contagious.

As a once homeless dog, he knows how important shelter and a place to call your own is for your mental and physical health. He was curious about Annmary's background and found that she recently completed her doctorate degree in social work at Simmons College. No wonder her ideas and energy seemed so modern and intelligent. Kane believes that Annmary values lifelong learning. What better recipe for success than years of job experience paired with recent education. Thank you for all you do Annmary, the staff, and the Board of Directors at Bread & Roses Housing Inc, a local non- profit doing amazing work in our community.

Kane Peaslee, Woof
Valley Patriot Columnist ◊

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Julian Stopyra Post 2023 Scholarship Recipients

The weather couldn't stop the members of the Julian Stopyra Post - Polish American Veterans of Lawrence from enjoying a picnic luncheon on Saturday, June 17th, 2023, with the ten college students who were the recipients of the Post's annual scholarship for students of Polish heritage studying for their undergraduate degrees. The annual scholarships are awarded based on the applicants' academic excellence, academic and community interests and achievements, interest in Polish subjects, and involvement in the Polish American community. Honored were Caroline Curran (University of Tampa), Jack Curran (Bryant University), Maggie Curran (UMass Amherst), Alexis Howard (Northeastern University), Cameron Smith (Franklin Pierce University), Jake Kelley (Emerson College), Lucas Kelley (UMass Amherst), Ava Korbani (Boston College), Jack Sullivan (Merrimack College), and Kiana McCormick (Plymouth State). The Julian Stopyra Post, which was founded in 1947, was named for Julian Stopyra, a radioman on the USS Arizona who was the first serviceman from Lawrence to die in service during World War II. Seventy-six years later, the Post remains an active organization and participates in many veterans' activities as well as donating to veterans' and other worthy causes. ◊

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In the City of Lawrence, MA.
Group "B" **Spring 2023**

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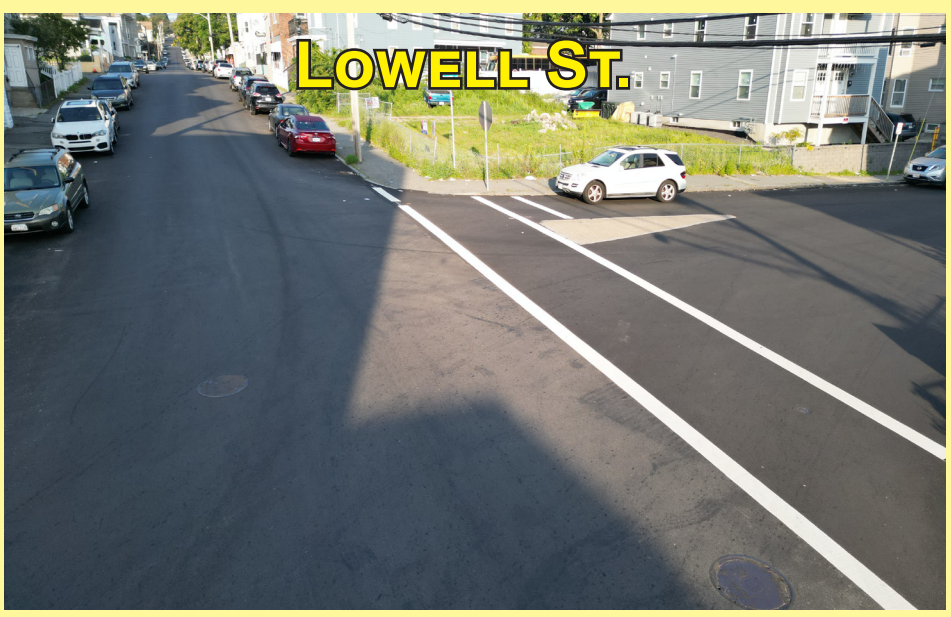

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FARLEY ST	SO.BROADWAY ST	END
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DORCHESTER ST	SOUTH UNION ST	WINTHROP AVE
HURST ST	MARKET ST	PORTLAND ST
STATE ST	FARLEY ST	EASTON ST
MANCHESTER ST	MAY ST	BROADWAY ST
COMMON ST	LAWRENCE ST	JACKSON ST
METHUEN ST	LAWRENCE ST	JACKSON ST
BROADWAY ST	HAVERHILL ST	COMMON ST
PLATT CT	PLATT ST	END
FERRY ST	MARSTON ST	HIGH ST
KEIGHLEY CT	BERKELEY ST	END
MAY ST	MANCHESTER ST	HAVERHILL ST
WEST ST	MANCHESTER ST	HAVERHILL ST
BIGELOW ST	BELKNAP ST	SANBORN ST
BORDER ST	NEWTON ST	TYLER ST
PACKARD ST	ANDOVER ST	WOLCOTT AVE
PORTLAND ST	OSGOOD ST	HURST ST
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PARK ST	LAWRENCE ST	BROADWAY ST
EUTAW ST	FITZ ST	FERN ST
APPLETON ST	ESSEX ST	CANAL ST
HAVERHILL ST	UNION ST	PROSPECT ST
MORAN CT	PLEASANT ST	END
MARGIN ST	HAVERHILL ST	ESSEX ST
LOWELL ST	# 320	# 525
JASPER ST	MILTON ST	FLORAL ST
LOWELL ST	HAMPSHIRE ST	LAWRENCE ST

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KEMPTON CT	MELVIN ST	END
STEARNS AVE	SARATOGA ST	METHUEN LINE
HUSE ST	PARK ST	SPRUCE ST
CURRIER ST	WILMOT ST	ERVING AVE
BRUCE ST	JACKSON ST	ERVING AVE
TRINITY ST	ERVING AVE	END
WHITE ST	HAVERHILL ST	MAPLE ST
MILL ST	ESSEX ST	CANAL ST
SUMMER AVE	FERRY ST	HAMILTON ST
COLBY ST	FERRY ST	END
SWAN ST	BERKELEY ST	METHUEN LINE
STORROW ST	WOODLAND ST	HIGH ST
TYLER ST	NEWTON ST	ATKINSON ST
ATKINSON ST	NEWTON ST	END
OAKWOOD AVE	RIDGE RD	FERRY ST
GROVE ST	PROSPECT ST	HIGH ST
GENERAL ST	UNION ST	PROSPECT ST
CANTON ST	PROSPECT ST	KENDALL ST
EAST HAVERHILL	FERRY ST	HIGH ST
ESSSEX AVE	ESSEX ST	BODWELL ST
WARWICK CT	WARWICK ST	END
MADISON ST	HAVERHILL ST	RIVERSIDE DR
VALLEY ST	FRANKLIN ST	BROADWAY ST
WENDELL ST	MANCHESTER ST	END
DAWES ST	JENNINGS ST	METHUEN LINE
MEADOW ST	COLUMBUS AVE	METHUEN LINE
FLORENCE ST	BROADWAY ST	WEST ST
HALLENAN AVE	HAVERHILL ST	END
AMES ST	HAVERHILL ST	END
NEWTON ST	ROWE ST	ANDOVER ST
CARLETON ST	ANDOVER ST	BIGELOW ST

Mayor
Brian A. DePeña

PUBLIC WORKS
CITY OF LAWRENCE
Jorge Jaime
DPW Director

SAISBURY

GENEST: FROM PAGE 11

posed by the investigators…" during the internal investigation.

Archinski retired from the Dracut Police Department under a 2007 Settlement Agreement with the town. The shotgun policy violation and Lo Kai incident were predominant subjects of that agreement. As part of the agreement, the suspensions for the shotgun policy violation and Lo Kai incident were both rescinded and expunged and Archinski was paid for the four days. In addition, Archinski was appointed to the position of "assistant to the parking clerk" and received $40 per week in special pay, retroactive to July 31, 2007, until he retired on December 31, 2008. It's unclear what Archinski did to earn the special pay, but it's clear he padded his pension with it for the last 18 months he was on the town payroll.

O'Brien says he got a new batch of documents a few days after the July Selectmen's meeting, but they still contain many redactions and exclude documents related to several incidents involving Archinski. For example, in one instance, Archinski was accused of sending an email in 1998 described by Police Chief Peter Bartlett as "offensive and profane." The email was printed and posted on the bulletin board in the police department and resulted in a complaint against Archinski from a fellow officer, saying it was discriminatory. Originally, the documents about the internal investigation, including officer statements, were produced, but the email itself was withheld. In the most recent batch of documents, the email was again withheld, although other documents related to it were released.

In another incident, from 1996, Archinski was accused of posting a cartoon on a fellow officer's locker in the police station. That cartoon, which was previously withheld, has now been produced. The caption Archinski allegedly provided with the cartoon, however, is still redacted.

O'Brien says he's once again asked the secretary of state to make the town turn over the missing documents and documents without redactions. He's also asking the attorney general's office to investigate. An investigation should be done about the timeframe and why the release of these documents has been stalled. It's taken far too long. The spirit and letter of the law are clear: public records should be made available to the public, quickly.

-- Brian Genest is the producer and host of Eye On Dracut, winner of the 2022 Hometown Media Award for News

No Place Like Home

Philippe Thibault
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

There are defining events in every community across Massachusetts and in the Merrimack Valley. Lawrence has the Feast of the Three Saints, and Lowell has the Lowell Folk Festival. Each draws a crowd of revelers and pulls the community closer together. The Town of Dracut's signature event is Old Home Day. Although not started long ago, its short history and impact on the community is nearly immeasurable.

The inaugural event was on September 15 and 16, 2001.

If that year evokes a memory, it is the year of the Terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. Dracut's connection to the tragic events were deep. The pilot of American Airline Flight 11 was Dracut's own son and gentleman farmer Captain John Ogonowski. The town was devastated and shocked. Little was known of the event other than we lost John and many other citizens of Dracut and the surrounding communities. The world seemed to stop and how would it continue.

The Dracut Old Home Day Committee wrestled with those very thoughts. Their inaugural event that took a year of planning was only a few days away. There were thoughts of cancelling, considering the somber mood. Others felt it to be a tribute to John's memory. It would be forevermore a remembrance of the event and a celebration of life and community. I for one am grateful for the choice made.

Old Home Day had a committee that was dedicated to the community. Ken and Sandi Cunha, Dave Paquin were the front people. Dave Paquin is still active to this day. The event was shortened to a single day rather than the two-day extravaganza. The resources and coordination needed to host as a two-day event were a logistical dilemma. The initial set up the night before for booths, tents, and vendors, all patrolled the entire night by the Dracut Police Department. Even as a single day event, Dracut Old Home Day caters to over fifteen thousand guests.

In the past few years, a new generation has stepped forward to continue the original work started. Lyndie Shaw and Dan Croce have taken over for Ken and Sandi. Lyndie has been coordinating the 5K Road Race for years and she handles the logistics like nobody else. Her business at ML Shaw is a good training ground for multi-tasking. Dan has been involved in numerous organizations including the Centralville Sportsman's Club in Dracut. He also has an aptitude for the work of organizing and managing such a seemingly chaotic event. The new crew still has the original goals of community and giving back. The Old Home Day Committee has returned funds to various organizations and departments over the years at a level that would astound those not familiar with the generosity of Dracut. Last year, the Dracut Fire Department was the recipient of approximately $5,000.00 to purchase equipment for aquatic search and rescue: waterproof radios, throw lines and helmets, and flotation devices. The committee has raised over $500,000.00 since the first event in 2001.

The Dracut Firefighters also run programs for kids and provide information to the community to safeguard the family. Dracut Access Television, the local cable access provider, rolls out their state-of-the-art production van to capture the festivities and broadcast live. There are food vendors from the town and surrounding communities with all sorts of ethnic flavors, each a delicacy. Booths displaying wares and services of the likes seldom seen, row upon row. The antique cars and farm equipment will evoke memories in the old and stir interest in the young. Shaw Farm has also provided a hayride in the past and will do the same again this year. There will be a midway for the amusement of children as well as games for the adults. I'm not sure who is volunteering for the dunk tank this year. I would suggest politicians if willing.

The event will be held on September 9th, 2023, at the Englesby Elementary School, 1580 Lakeview Avenue, Dracut MA. The event starts with a 9/11 Ceremony at 9AM and will run until 5PM. Rain or shine, but then again, it's always sunny in Dracut. There is truly no place like home. ◊

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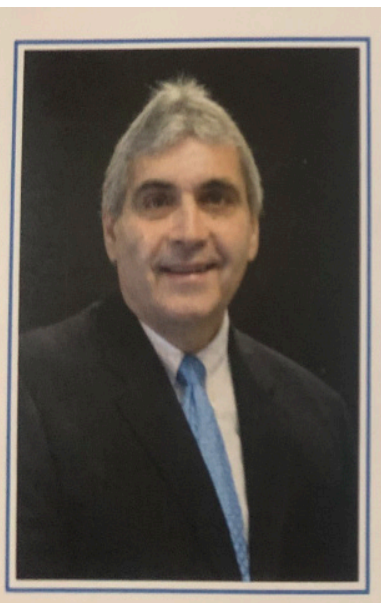

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My Efforts to Audit the State Legislature

IN YOUR CORNER with AUDITOR DIZOGLIO

As State Auditor, I remain committed to increasing transparency, accountability, and equity across state government – which includes conducting an audit of the Massachusetts Legislature.

In March 2023, my office began an audit of the Massachusetts Legislature and notified the Senate President and House Speaker of my intention to conduct this audit. While all other state entities have welcomed audits from our office as matters of routine, these legislative leaders have refused to comply.

Our Legislature is responsible for the allocation of tens of billions of dollars, including millions that are directly allocated for its own operations.

Bills are able to be passed through committees in the middle of the night, with no public hearings, and with no record of how legislators voted. Only a handful of people get to participate in back-room state budget negotiations that impact every area of the Commonwealth —leaving working class families in the dark.

This performance audit of the Legislature includes an examination of its activities and functions to help to shine a light on where improvements are needed. In accordance with our findings, our audit will provide recommendations for improvement to help make the government work better for all of us - regardless of family background, bank balance or ZIP code.

Despite consistent pushback, and claims that the State Auditor's Office does not have the authority to conduct this audit, our office will continue under the law. To date, our office has found at least 113 legislative audits that historically demonstrate precedent.

Only in more recent years has this matter of routine been stymied and the pushback by current legislative leaders is unacceptable. Massachusetts is frequently ranked as one of the least transparent states in the nation. It's time for meaningful change and a Legislature that is held accountable to the people it's meant to serve.

I will continue to conduct our audit, ask the Attorney General for her full support, and support a ballot initiative to give you — the voters — a chance to let the Legislature know that they should be held to the same standard as every other state entity.

Please feel free to contact me on ways to get involved at diana@dianadizoglio.com.

Yours in service,
Diana DiZoglio
State Auditor ◊

Arbitrator Rules in Favor of MA Troopers Suspended or Fired for Refusing Vaccine

Boston, MA – Seven members of the State Police Association of Massachusetts who were previously suspended and an additional Trooper who had returned to duty after seeking a religious exemption to the Commonwealth's vaccine mandate have prevailed in an extended legal battle with the Commonwealth and Department of the State Police. An independent arbitrator has found that the Department of the State Police did violate the Trooper's rights to anti-discrimination and affirmative action when they were denied reasonable accommodations for their sincerely held religious beliefs.

On Friday, August 4th, an arbitrator ruled in favor of the eight Troopers, resulting in seven of them being given the option to be reinstated. As part of the award handed down by the arbitrator, the Department of the State Police must contact all impacted Troopers to offer them their previous positions with full back pay retroactive to their initial suspension. They have also been awarded their full seniority rights and all benefits minus any interim earnings and/or unemployment compensation.

Originally filed in 2021, the Association has maintained that the Department of the State Police and Baker Administration failed to provide proper consideration and reasonable accommodations to our members whose sincerely held religious beliefs prevented them from getting the Covid-19 vaccination.

Asked for comment on the victory, Association President Patrick McNamara said:

"Earlier today, I had the distinct honor and privilege of informing seven of our Troopers, who have been suspended without pay due to Executive Order 595, that they would be returning to work. This fight began in October of 2021 when the Association filed a grievance on their behalf. Since then, the Association has been committed to making these members whole. Through this lengthy and grueling grievance and arbitration process, the Association has remained steadfast in our fight to right the injustices of the Baker Administration.

Executive Order 595 was more than just an affront to the hard-working members of the Mass State Police, it was an attack on organized labor and the rights of our members. Governor Baker and his administration refused to listen or work with our Association, but today we can no longer be ignored. These members, whose religious convictions were trampled, and who were left without pay or benefits, now can choose to return to work and will be made whole through retroactive pay and earned seniority.

I would like to personally thank and recognize the hard work of Association Vice President Luke Bonin, who continued to champion this cause through arbitration after my election to Presidency, as well as our legal team from Barrault and Associates, led by managing partner Leah Barrault. Today's victory would not have been possible without them.

Although today is a day to rejoice and celebrate a win for organized labor, our fight is not finished. Thirteen of our members remain out of work, unfairly terminated by the Baker Administration, and left with the scars of a spiteful and unfounded designation of being dishonorably discharged. To those who doubted our commitment and criticized our fight, today reaffirms what I have said since day one; the State Police Association Massachusetts will always defend our members' rights."

Managing Partner of Barrault and Associates, Leah Marie Barrault Esq. said, "The Barrault and Associates team is pleased with the outcome of this matter. The arbitrator's conclusion that the Commonwealth, and more specifically the Department of the State Police, did not properly administer the reasonable accommodation portion of the religious exemption request process was based on sound facts. She found that eight troopers hold a sincere religious belief that conflicted with the vaccine and that they should have been afforded the opportunity to have their individual accommodation requests reviewed and not summarily discarded. That the Department failed to provide this opportunity violated Massachusetts Law against discrimination. We were honored to be chosen by the Association to fight on behalf of these brave men and women of the State Police, and we look forward to continuing to fight on behalf of them and the thousands of public safety personnel both local and state that we serve on a daily basis."

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Mayor DePeña About to Regain Local Control of the Lawrence Schools System from the State

After 12 years of state receivership of the Lawrence Public Schools, Mayor Brian DePeña has not only negotiated with the state for the city to regain control of the schools, but has hired a consultant from Harvard to put together a transition plan to make that happen.

Mayor DePeña hired James Caras (President of Caras Community Investments) who appeared on the Paying Attention! Podcast last month with Octavian Spanner (Senior Advisor to the Maor on Policy and External Affairs) to discuss this historic move.

Asked Mr. Carras; role would be, Spanner said: "He was hired as a consultant to put together a policy document and create a pathway for economic prosperity for Lawrence. Initially, the way he started, was that he connected the city with the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard where we had our graduate students assemble a series of information, did surveys, and also communicated with other communities to prepare a document to guide the city on a pathway that was successful. He is now in charge of preparing the turnaround plan for the schools."

"He will also be the liaison between the city and the state to create the policies that will guide how the city will regain control of the schools."

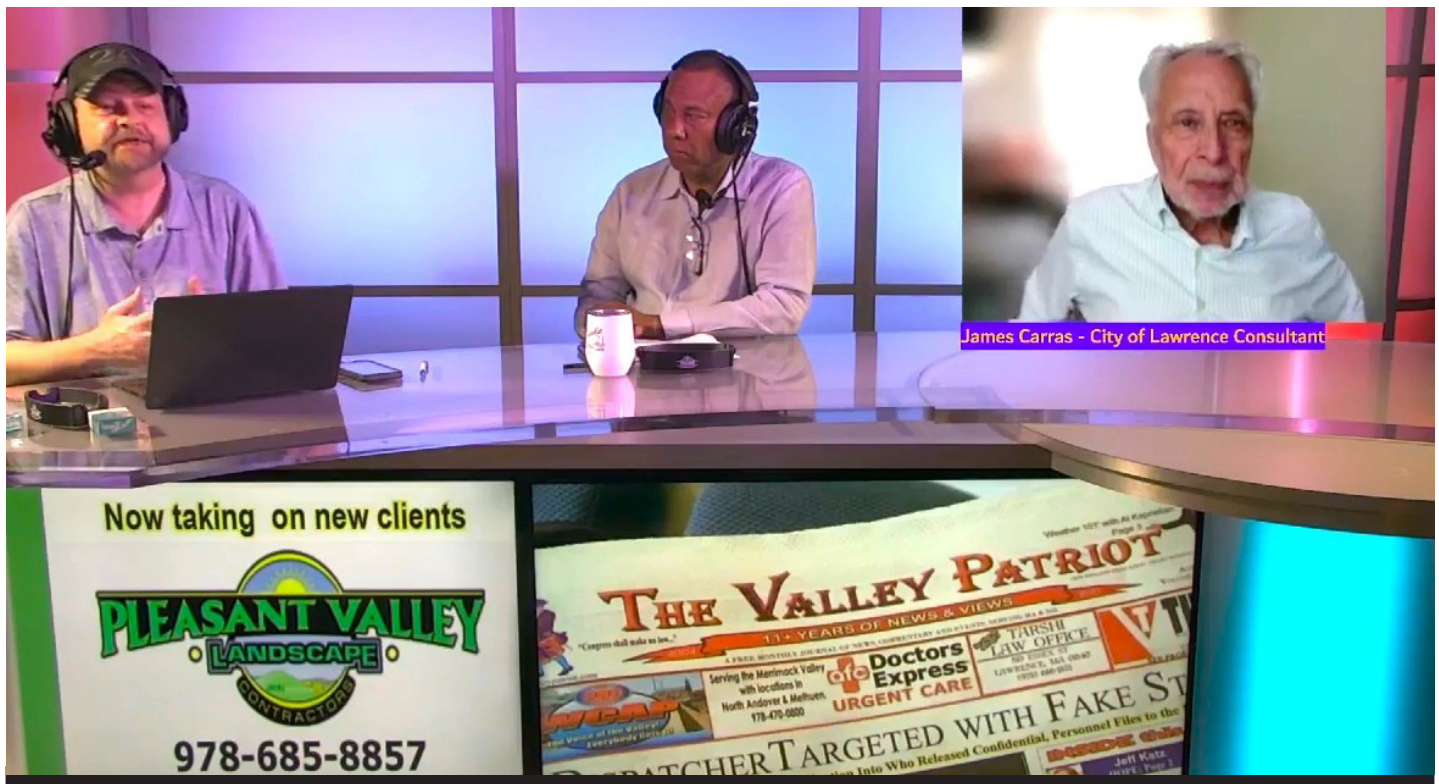
James Carras: "My role is specifically centered around the schools and getting back from state controlled to city controlled. Needless to say, it's a complex issue. It's not an easy issue. The state has had control of the school system for over 12 years. I'm not here to judge how well the state has done or not done. There were certain indicators initially, that the schools were improving. But, during Covid and the last few years we have seen those benchmarks have been decreased."

"There are a number of issues that need to be dealt with. We have been in discussions with the commissioner of education's office in terms of what those issues are, and what we need to address. I am working on - in conjunction with the city - a transition plan that we will submit to the commissioner of education, and hopefully get their agreement to move ahead with a timeline and specific benchmarks, that need to take place to move this forward as quickly as we can."

"I will be meeting with the Lawrence Educational Alliance Board in September to officially begin that process. I've been doing a lot of research and preparing the transition plan, but we will officially kick it off in September."

"On the issue is accountability, which is critical to any system, particularly public-school systems. So, how does that all take place? It starts from the top. The top is the superintendent. So, moving forward with this transition plan is the selection of a new superintendent of schools."

"By law that Superintendent has to be named by the commissioner of education. As the commissioner of education, he has control of the schools and they the authority to name a new superintendent right now. However, we have a commitment from the commissioner's office that they will listen to the input of the community, meaning the school committee, the educational alliance, the city council, and certainly the mayor's office as well."



Octavian Spanner from Mayor DePeña's Office appeared on the Paying Attention! Podcast (at the Studio 21 Podcast Cafe) with Harvard's James Carras to Announce the transition plan to give control of the Lawrence Public Scools back to the People of Lawrence.

"Getting control back to the city is not going to happen overnight. Hopefully by next year but, it's hard to say when that transition will actually take place. Meanwhile, there will be a new superintendent who comes in. That superintendent, and the values of that superintendent needs to have, and the strengths that superintendent needs to have centers around a level of accountability. We need to make sure that teachers are not burdened with, make-work (frivolous) responsibilities. Those are the types of things that we are hearing from the community, and we want to be able to influence the commission of education as they make the final selection of a new superintendent until the city finally has control over the school system."

Octavian Spanner said that the city also has a major responsibility and pointed out that during the campaign for mayor in 2021 The DePeña Campaign team developed a plan to look at different priority areas that needed attention.

"Education was obviously one of them. Most people who have run for mayor have not had a plan. So, I just wanted to read to you what Mayor DePeña said during the 2021 campaign:

"My approach for the Lawrence Public Schools is to accelerate the exit of receivership by ensuring our education system meets sufficient improvement to be removed from the designation as 'struggling' to a high achieving and innovative institution.

To achieve this goal I will work in partnership with the Lawrence Alliance for Education Board, and the newly appointed superintendent to emphasize the continues renewal of the performance indicators to evaluate the extent to which the Lawrence public schools has met the school intervention plan and annual goals such as: improving school attendance, academic performance, MCAS proficiency, class sizes, graduation rates, dropout rates, and parent engagement, as well as professional development for teachers and administrators."

"Immediately after the mayor was sworn in, he met with the commissioner of education and we discussed the fact that the Lawrence Public Schools need to be removed from state control. Based on that those conversations, the mayor requested the city take more of an active role to bring changes at the top. In this case it would be the Lawrence Alliance for Education.

Asked what he thought would be the biggest challenges that he would face in the new turnaround plan Mr. Carras replied:

"I think the biggest challenge in this transition is getting all of the stakeholders together and in agreement. You have a teacher's union, you have parents, the students, the city administration, the school committee, the Alliance for Education, you have the state, and the commissioner of education. So, you have a number of different interests, and all of them have views and opinions on what's important to them."

"My job, and the mayor's job is not only to listen to everybody and see how we bring everyone together, but where do we find areas of agreement on how we move forward. Because, if we have seven different agendas, there's not going to be any success. So, the biggest challenge is collaboration. But, I think we have a process moving forward to do so. It's going to take time but we need to listen to everybody and bring them together. Then come up with a plan that everyone can agree with."

"This is complex stuff, and let me just add, that when we were first asked to look at this, we did a national search in terms of transition plans for school systems around the country. Quite honestly, there are not many examples out there in terms of how this takes place. There's not a template anywhere. This is something they do not teach in graduate school.

Asked if he could talk about the positive improvements that would happen once a transition happens Carras, said,

"I think the number one thing that you're going to see as a result of this process is the renewed confidence about the future of the Lawrence School System; from the students, the parents, the teachers, and the administration as well as the state. I think once this is all done and over with, and we all come to an agreement, people will see this as a new day, and there will be enthusiasm and confidence that we are moving forward. I think that can be accomplished immediately. Without that it's going to be difficult to achieve everything else."

Asked if the meetings they are going to have for the transition are going to be public, Mr. Carras, said:

"Absolutely, I think there's going to be a combination of public and private meetings. My history is to use a variety of ways of gauging what the community is interested in sharing. The first is always public forums. We are also going to do focus-groups with small groups of people sitting down and having a candid conversation. We are also going to surveys of people online so they are able to pick up their phone and respond to the survey. We are also going to do one-on-one interviews with people. So, we will use a variety of methods. But, we want to make sure this is done in conjunction with the mayor's office, the alliance for education board, and the state. This needs to be sponsored by everyone, and again we are building up the spirit of collaboration so it's not just our interests, or the commissioner against the city, but everybody working together. It's not easy. It's a contentious issue. But, right now I think everyone's excited to move forward with a transition plan."

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TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

Martha Tatro (left) won the Service Above Self Award from the Methuen Rotary Club and was able to donate $500 to a charity of her choice. Martha chose TMF! Martha used to have the founder Michael Gorman in her class and has seen many of her fellow students be involved with TMF over the years.

WINSTON SAYS!

If I was a Methuen Councilor I'd be really worried right about now!

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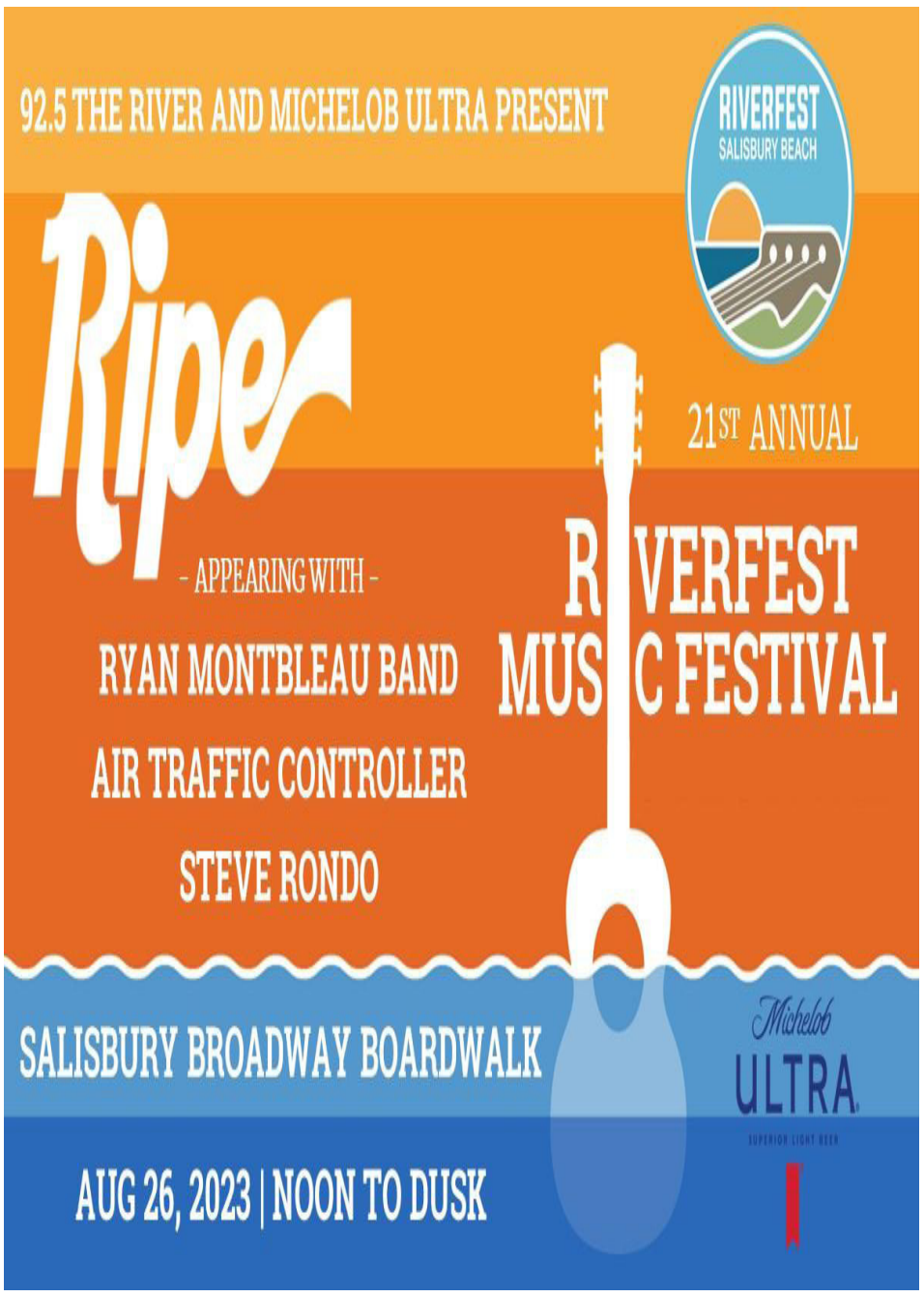
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8:30 PM | Bandstand
Aaron Caruso with Marissa Famiglietti, Phantom of the Opera
8:30 PM | Tripoli Stage
Joe Samba
Saturday, Sept. 2
12:00 PM | Feast Opens
3:00 PM | Bandstand
Stephen Savio
3:30 PM | Tripoli Stage
Pablo Castro
4:30 PM | Saint Alfio Cafe
Mary Ann Esposito, Cooking Demonstrations
6:00 PM | Bandstand
Stefano Marchese
6:00 PM | Tripoli Stage
Rico Barr Band featuring the JJR Horns
7:30 PM | Neighborhoods
Torchlight Procession honoring the Three Saints
8:00 PM | Bandstand
The Vulcanica String Ensemble
9:00 PM | Bandstand
Tre Santi Siciliani Orchestra with Tenor Salvatore Bonaffini
9:00 PM Tripoli Stage
Mike Girard's Big Swinging Thing
Sunday, Sept. 3
10:00 AM | Mass in Honor of the Three Saints
3:00 PM
Procession of the Statues of the Three Saints through the Feast neighborhood, starting at Holy Rosary Shrine Church
4:00 PM | Tripoli Stage
Souled Out Showband
4:15 PM | Bandstand
Tony Pace
6:30 PM | Society Building
"Moment of Glory" with Benediction and Cantata
8:30 PM | Bandstand
The B Street Bombers
VisitMA.com
Mass Cultural Council
Platinum Sponsors
Tuscan Brands
Trident
Jackson Lumber & Millwork
Tripoli
Gold Sponsors
Market Basket
Jay Gee's
Donna's Famous Italian Sausage
Silver Sponsors
Colizzi Memorials
Costa Eagle Broadcasting
Eagle Tribune
Enterprise Bank
Lawrence General Hospital
Sheehan's Towing
Details at: www.ThreeSaintsInc.org

Haverhill Cultural Treasures
Tours at Twilight
Thursday, August 24, 5-8pm
$25/adult
Kids under 17 FREE
Buttonwoods Museum
HEARTH COOKING DEMO
Duston-Dustin Garrison House
OPEN FOR TOURS
HFFM
OPEN FOR TOURS
MOP
OPEN FOR TOURS
Tullersall Farm
OPEN HOUSE
Rocks Village
HANDTUB HOUSE TOURS
Whittier Birthplace
HOUSE TOURS
Winnekenni
CASTLE HISTORY
One ticket gets visitors into all participating Treasures for that evening.
SCAN THIS CODE TO ORDER TICKETS

Property Sales, Foreclosures for JULY, 2023 in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover. (All properties are listed in order; seller, buyer, price, address.)

Northern Essex Registry of Deeds

M. Paul Iannuccillo, Register

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
of Massachusetts

ANDOVER

CIM OFC Andover Tech MA LLC, 50 Minuteman Owner LLC, $34,220,000, 50 Minuteman Rd

CIM OFC Andover Tech MA LLC, 6 Tech Owner LLC, $23,780,000, 6 Tech Dr

Thomas Carnevale Tr & 200 Bridge Street Realty Trust, Community Day Care Center of Lawrence Inc, $3,900,000, 31 Webster St

Lynda J Percy Living Trust & Douglas R Percy Living Trust & Lynda J Percy Tr, Michael & Elizabeth T Carli, $2,150,000, 9 Basswood Ln

Michael J & Leigh H Ferrantino Trs & Ferrantino Family Revocable Trust, Andrea Ellen Crane & Liam Davis Crane, $1,725,000, 11 Starr Ave West

John C & Kirsten A DeSanto, Brandon J & Marianna J Eigenberg, $1,575,000, 6 Phaeton Cir

Barry R & Amy J Finegold Trs/Amy J Gottesman Tr & ANB Realty Trust, Farah Deeba & Muhammad Irfan Malik, $1,550,000, 42 Stirling St

Richard S Feldman & Frann L Bilus, Muhammad Badre Ekram & Zannat Ekram, $1,525,000, 10 Knollcrest Dr

Doug & Jennifer Percy, Brian J Pitts & Jacqueline Ciriello-Pitts, $1,485,500, 15 Avon St

William C McCartney Tr & Patricia M Bachmann Tr & McCartney Bachmann Massachusetts Realty Trust, Carmeron S Vermette & Kayla D Hilkert, $1,330,000, 7 Bradley Rd

Christopher & Amy Bositis, Scot B & Anne M Wilks, $1,325,000, 9 Chapman Ave

Timothy L & Alison H Vaill, Eden Lane LLC, $1,300,000, 9B Bancroft Rd

9 Punchard Avenue Real Estate Trust & Bernadette L Lionetta Tr, Corry & Morgan McLaughlin, $1,245,000, 9 Punchard Ave

Scott & Cynthia Worthley, Matthew & Samantha Barnes, $1,220,000, 16 Gavin Cir

Thomas R & Joan C Murtagh, Robert J & Lisa A Drew, $1,215,000, 33 Ivana Dr Unit 15-2

Daniel & Danielle Jamieson, Carlos & Jessica Llanos, $1,199,000, 83 Chestnut St

Qingju Ma, Dipeshgir Dineshchandra Bava & Brinda Dipeshgir Bava, $1,151,000, 22 Inwood Ln

Laura M & Paul T Buonopane Jr, Douglas Jellison & Jill Segal, $1,150,000, 4 Village Wy

Odlum Realty Trust & Francis A & Marjory M Odlum Trs, Robert & Lori Moccaldi, $1,055,000, 1 Agawam Ln

Margaret A Behling, Mark & Ashley Pohlman, $1,035,000, 24 Blueberry Hill Rd

Elizabeth A Davidson, Jonathan & Lindsey L'Ecuyer, $1,001,000, 3 Pioneer Cir

Arshad Sultan, Aditya & Parveen Garg, $950,000, 6 Saint James Dr Unit 6

Stephen P & Donna C Mills, Dylan & Angela Beck, $901,216, 17 Kathleen Dr

Ghamale Trust & Nemi Singh Tr & Neera Tomar Tr, Chad & Noelle McClutchy, $859,900, 8 Sevilla Rd

Albert F Goyette Living Trust & Nancy R Goyette Living Trust & Nancy R & Albert F Goyette Trs, Peter Mueller & Vanessa Miriam Zoltan, $848,000, 40 Chester St

Timothy J Connors Tr & Kathleen A Connors & Connors Family Irrevocable Trust, Tam Le & Vy Tran, $815,000, 2 Embassy Ln

Doris M Sidon, James Richard Crowley III, $750,000, 501 Lowell St

Wesley R & Kay H Grace Trs & Grace Family Nominee Trust, Mark F & Stefanie Rae, $739,000, 19 Summer St

Harun Elmasri & Abeer Aldwaik, Nikhil Sasidharan Pillai & Aparajita Dasgupta, $725,000, 1 Lovejoy Rd

Peter C McLaughlin & Maria Coletta McLaughlin, Amy C Jackson, $680,000, 201 Highland Rd

Resa M Doherty Tr & Resa M Doherty Living Trust, Erica Leigh French, $675,000, 174 Lowell St Unit 2

Virginia Belle Pelletier/Virginia B Pelletier, Ilir Sollaku & Ermelinda Isufi, $665,000, 345 Salem St

Christopher J & Ashley M Pastore/Ashley M Puppo, Jeanne M Smith, $599,000, 78 North St

Delia H Strobel, Steven Haginicolas, $594,000, 35 Gould Rd

Maurice Cohen Est & Roy F Gelineau Jr, Antonia Cardona, $590,000, 122 Lowell St

Lee H & Elizabeth C Novick, Donna M Coppola, $565,000, 10 Temple Place Unit 8

Gail D Luce/Gail P Luce & Lorna A McIntyre & Diane L Damon, Amanda Gates Carlson & Carl Michael Carlson, $560,000, 3 Hall Ave

Carmen Ostrowski, Line Drive Realty LLC, $540,000, 150 Salem St

Lingting Ye & Yan Sun, Peter Reilly & Carolyn Roos, $499,900, 50 High St Unit 15

William L Maher, Sean M & Grazia Donohoo, $455,100, 1 Powder Mill Sq Unit 301A

Deborah L D'Agostino, Susan P & David J McDonald, $400,000, 36 Central St Unit 5

Silvija Aprans, Christopher Parnagian, $350,000, 80 Washington Park Dr Unit H-3

Rong Fei Zhang, Vijay Kumar, $330,000, 60A Washington Park Dr Unit 4

Lucia A Dasilva, Stephanie Grimaldi, $273,000, 10B Washington Park Dr Unit 5

Victor M & Isabel G Fernandez, 33 Investment Group LLC, $250,000, 197 High St Unit 2

Nagaho Realty Trust & Mary Jane Bausemer Tr, Joy T & Matthew J Bausemer, $250,000, 26 Pearson St

Robert K Murgia, Elizabeth A Zappelli & Michael R Murgia, $200,000, 172 Lowell St

Stephen & Virginia Ciampa, Krupa Shankar Sethuraman, $190,000, 2 Colonial Dr Unit D2-4

Hushun Chu, Daniel R Walenty, $120,000, 1 Colonial Dr Unit D1-5

Brian L Page Est & Christin L Page, Constitution Capital Partners LLC, $110,000, 10B Colonial Dr Unit 1

LAWRENCE

Thomas Carnevale Tr & 200 Bridge Street Realty Trust, Community Day Care Center of Lawrence Inc, $3,900,000, 20 Ballard Wy

Branco Realty Trust & Shirley M Branco Tr, Shree Maruti LLC, $905,000, 89-95 Essex St

Tanya Marie & Anthony Martinez , Margarita Corporan, $806,000, 278-282 High St

Carl J Cincotta Jr & Lisa J Cincotta, D & C Properties LLC, $775,000, 14-16 Trenton St

Miguelina Richardson, Eddy J Matos, $715,000, 116 Cross St

Luz M Veras Martinez De Leiniz & Gladys Leiniz/Gladys Lozano, Eufemia Molina & Maria Javier Jaime & Marino Javier, $700,000, 27-29 Arlington St

Luis J Martinez, Gregory W De La Cruz Arias, $668,000, 26-28 Hobson St

Alicia Germosen, Filbert Ferreira, $660,000, 91 Farnham St

Steven Ciambelli, Gewdy & Dionelys Espino, $590,000, 26 Sparkle Dr

Sean M Peterson & Eileen P Peterson Est , Paulina Gonzalez Jimenez, $585,000, 131 Mt Vernon St

Reynaldo DeJesus, Katherine Morel, $540,000, 290 Salem St

Sheila K Manzi Trust & Sheila K Manzi Tr/ Sheila Anne Manzi Tr, Tomas C & Andrea A Santiago, $485,000, 26 Mann St

Eduard & Anny Javier/Anny Sanchez, Marvin L De Jesus & Judith Tejada Tejada, $470,000, 114 Market St

Carol Mack Tr & Alan M Chetson Est, Miguel Antonio Gil, $460,000, 36 Jefferson St

Mario A Chavez & Fidel S Munoz Arrivillaga, Juan E Fernandez Duran, $445,000, 6 Rhine St

Adolfo & Anna-Maria Cozzone, Sandra Vazguez, $425,000, 168 Marston St

Miguelito & Francisca Peralta, Migeul Peralta & Eliesser Hiraldo Peralta, $400,000, 2-4 Lowell Ter

Maria Esther Almonte, Angela L Suero, $400,000, 81-83 Woodland St

Martin De La Cruz, Altagracia Lachapel, $347,000, 102 Bailey St Unit 2

Maria Nisel Matias, Eva M Jimenez & Felix A Rosario, $315,000, 9A Hobson St Unit B

Juan Argely Valerio, Alfa Properties LLC, $250,000, 242 Mount Vernon St Unit 3

METHUEN

Perrault Family Limited Partnership, Stergios T Papadopulos Tr & Olympia VI Realty Trust, $1,400,000, 262-264 Broadway

Elisa S & David P Harrington, Shivam Rajnikant Patel & Vaidehee Patel, $882,000, 6 Margarets Wy

JR Builders Inc , Jessica Kirk & Christine Anne Marsh, $820,000, 6 Geramat Wy

Toll MA Land III LP, Greg & Diane Roche, $784,995, 12 Cardinal Rd Unit 181

Richard A & Mary Jeanne Pantanella, Frank J Sorrenti & Julia M Anderson, $775,000, 9 Sierra Ct Unit 11

Michael J & Mary Brooks Trs & M & M Brooks Irrevocable Trust, Diala & Rami Khoury, $760,000, 50 Archibald Ave

Toll MA Land III LP, Brian J & Diane M Milewski Trs & Diane M Milewski Living Trust & Brian J Milewski Living Trust, $751,099, 58 Phoebe St Unit 92

Anthony & Shirley A Amico, William C McCartney Tr & Patricia M Bachmann Tr & McCartney Bachmann Massachusetts Realty Trust, $751,000, 10 Herrick Rd Unit 5

Toll MA Land III LP, Alan Beaudoin, $750,290, 56 Phoebe St Unit 93

Toll MA Land III LP, Diane Ahlman & Marcia Marchini Maia, $747,620, 60 Phoebe St Unit 91

Henry P & Charlotte Zawadzki, Derek Fraser & Pamela DeGregorio, $730,000, 18 Heritage Ln

Stanley Gabryjelski Tr/Stanislaw Gabryjelski Tr & Stanley Gabryjelski Living Trust &, Penninah Andrade, $705,000, 27 Copley Dr

Brian P & Cecilia A Robichaud, Drew Madison & Spencer Hobbs, $700,000, 428 Pelham St

Carol A & Lawrence E Sylvester, Christopher E & Eileen Getchell, $700,000, 70 West St

Reem Property LLC, Wayna Cordero de Robles, $690,000, 20 Pond St

Middlesex Building Associates LLC, Marcos Bretas Moreira & Lidiana Viera Bretas, $690,000, 144 Pleasant St

Jennifer Stevanovich, April & Kevin Ordonez, $690,000, 34 Venice Rd

Jose A & Juana R Cespedes/Juana R Baez, Raul O Apolango Sanaitan, $680,000, 158 Lowell St

George Brian Boes & Mary K Boes, Nickoloas & Maria Gionis, $675,000, 6 Houston Ave

Mark J & Elizabeth Dawley, Alexander Corsetti & Zarina Smetankina, $660,000, 289 Pelham St

Mark & Rachel M Daley, Guillermo Nava & Enrique Badell, $660,000, 32 Westwind Dr

Robert J & Jennifer A Pacini, Lissette Torres, $655,000, 2 Olympic Village Dr

Thomas Clarke & Hannah Smith, Harpreet Singh, $650,000, 26 Woodland St

Wayna Cordero de Robles, Sadrac Anthony Jules, $642,000, 113 Boston St

Seventeen Chadwick Street Nominee Realty Trust & David B Eagan Sr Tr & Deborah M Eagan Tr, Claudy Beauvais & Mary N Hall, $600,000, 17 Chadwich St

Derek Herbert, Jennifer Guevara, $600,000, 47 Louise Ave

Perrault Family Limited Partnership, Stergios T Papadopulos Tr & Olympia VI Realty Trust, $600,000, 266 Broadway

Graeme Millar, Yanira Reynoso, $594,000, 14 Woodland Cir

Brian E & Kelley E Rossell/Kelley Rossell, Zachary Joseph Beeley & Madison Fantasia Downes, $581,000, 3 Butternut Ln

Shirley A LaPointe Tr & Shirley A LaPointe 2008 Trust, Raghed J Nakkoul & Nasim I Alibrahim, $550,000, 10 Hobart Rd

John R Payson, Sandis Heredia De La Paz & Solanyi Figureo-Reyes, $550,000, 90 Piedmont St

Nancy Jutras, Adbrand Realty Trust & Sarah Dagher Tr, $545,400, 27 Davis St

Ana Villavizar, Darvin Lopez & Milsa Lopez Aguirre, $540,000, 64 Lowell St

Geraldine Monahan/Geraldine Rainville , Filippl D'Amato Tr & Izabella & Thomas D'Amato Family Trust, $526,000, 31 Partridge Rd

Joy B J Garland & Nathalie G Balch-Kenney/Nathalie G Balch, Victor Mejia Toj & Julio Mejia Toj, $525,000, 11 Ruskin Ave

Jillian F Baillargeon Tr & Baillargeon Family Trust of 2023, Mario Eligio Lantigua & Yari Carmen Lantigua, $500,000, 78 Anderson Dr

Crystal M & Paul J Nartiff Jr, Djonata Cardoso Borges, $500,000, 12 Marylou St

Kimball Lawrence St LLC, Jenny Rodriguez & Migeul R Reynoso Bonilla, $499,000, 1 Rosewood Rd

Brian E Reese, Victor Familia & Zoraida Nunez, $490,000, 50 Arlington St

Windy S Monfiston & Vanydia Simon, Kewin Gomez & Tania Collado, $490,000, 19 Carleton St

Joseph & Stefanie Toppi, Cole & Autumn Burton, $482,500, 44 Arnold St

Kelly Smith Tr & Herdegen Family Revocable Trust, Aracelis Delacruz, $480,000, 11 Glen Forest Ln

Kyle & Shannon Zappala/Shannon Augeri , Edgar Smith Roman-Ramirez & Sandra Patricia Guevara Rios, $479,000, 6 Ford St

Lisa Perocchi, Pauline D Rivera & Luis M Rivera Toucet, $475,000, 1 Boornazian Rd

Yrcania & Miguel A Melo, Danny Polanco Martinez & Pelajio Rijo, $465,000, 205 Haverhill St

Sterling Ventures Inc, Valdez Enterprises LLC, $454,000, Milk St

Daher Group Inc, Candida Lopez, $450,000, 2 Grove St

Julie A Robichaud & Paul R Carver & Irene Rita Carver Est/Irene R Carver Est, Alondra Hernandez Santiago & Carmen Santiago, $450,000, 56 Oak Hill Dr

Arvind C & Savita A Patel Trs & Arvind C Patel & Savita A Patel AB Living Trust of 2016 & Lalit O & Shanti L Patel, Hard Work LLC, $413,300, 42-44 Adelaide Ave

Stephen R Masse Tr & Masse Family Trust, Edio Roberto Galvez, $400,000, 680 Lowell st

Ann Marie & Allen E Hartford Jr, Thallys F & Sabrina K Zache, $390,000, 447 Lowell St

Maureen M Haidaichuk Tr & Berthold Realty Trust, Kyu Kwan Lee, $385,000, 42 Conrad St

Robert E & Deborah M Seeliger, Sonia J Hadley, $382,000, 1 Riverview Blvd Unit 8-106

Sonia J Holman/Sonia J Hadley, Rafeal B Veloso & Nicole M Roberts, $365,000, 1 Riverview Blvd Unit 8-205

Laura Hitchmoth Tr & 5 Wallace Street Realty Trust, LBZ Holdings LLC, $350,000, 5 Wallace St Unit 4

Amanda Bennett, Cat Tuong Lai Nguyen & Son Hung Nguyen & Thi My Le Lai, $340,000, 177C Pleasant Valley St Unit C

Christine Sheehan, Carol A & Lawrence E Sylvester, $340,000, 34 Burnham Rd Unit 104

Newrez LLC, Wendy Y & Jose A Estrella Trs & AG&J Realty Trust, $325,000, 343 Hampshire Rd

Winthrop Realty LLC, Alan Kamal, $300,000, 128 Pleasant Valley St

Kenneth F Bourassa & Christine J Dryden & maureen D Connors, Kathleen M Bartlett Tr & Kathleen M Bartlett Revocable Trust, $270,000, 25 Christopher Dr Unit 70

Todd Fitzgerald Tr & Father and Son

TOP OF NEXT PAGE

AFC Urgent Care to Open in Haverhill

AFC Urgent Care and Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini are pleased to announce that a new urgent care walk-in clinic is returning to the Monument Square retail mall this coming fall! Zaka Shafiq and Lisa Williams have secured a rental agreement to lease the space formerly occupied by MedExpress at 296 Main St. and open an AFC Urgent Care Haverhill clinic. The currently vacant space is next door to Giovanni's restaurant, Aspen Dental and Walgreens pharmacy. The former MedExpress opened in 2015 and closed August 2022. AFC (American Family Care) is the largest urgent care clinic franchise in the country with more than 170 clinics in over 27 states, including locations in North Andover, Methuen, Swampscott, and Beverly. See full list of services and patient services at the new AFC Haverhill website: afcurgentcare.com/haverhill

REAL ESTATE CONTINUED

Realty Trust of 2017, C-Improvements LLC, $200,000, 136-138 Edgewood Ave

Mary R & George Simonian Jr , Randy Scott Carter & Dina V Carter, $190,000, 3 Winthrop Ave.

NORTH ANDOVER

Rodrigo Ballon & Vannesa Camacho, Andrew George Latarulo, $1,625,000, 99 Pheasant Brook Rd

Young Chan Park & Jinah Seo, Simona M Mocuta & Kashif A Ahmed, $1,600,000, 410 Great Pond Rd

Frank A & Penelope S Cieri, Kevin C & Ann M Flanigan, $1,275,000, 58 Old Village Ln

Richard S Balmas Living Trust & Richard S Balmas Tr & Carol Ann Balmas Living Trust & Carol Ann Balmas Tr, Steven & Lauren Dale, $1,125,000, 96 Bridle Path

Grace T & Frank B McFall III, Owen Shawn & Donesa Sobelman, $1,105,000, 125 Blue Ridge Rd

Kenneth James Pulaski Tr & Susan Slater Pulaski Tr & Susan Slater Pulaksi Revocable Trust & Kenneth James Pulaski Revocable Trust, Brent & Katelyn Collins, $995,000, 101 Rocky Brook Rd

Anil K & Sarada D Kommareddi, Devesha Trivedi & Fnu Antriksh, $995,000, 470 Chestnut St

Kenneth H & Gail R Sears, Vidal Primiterio, $910,000, 19 Waverly Rd

Bruce H & Karen S Robie, Catherine E & Dennis C Fitzgerald Jr, $900,000, 119 Sandra Ln

Felipe Lapyda & Elisa Farber, Jiamin Pan & Yao Lu, $825,000, 89 Mayflower Dr Unit 13

Jeffrey King Tr & Sourjen Realty Trust, Anthony & Sorina S Puzzo, $813,000, 153 Hay Meadow Rd

Juergen & Barbara Conrad, Thiago Olimpio Duarte & Paula Pelegrino Pinheiro, $806,000, 7 Empire Dr

Nuket M Dirico, Hans & Katherine Jules, $805,000, 406 Chestnut St

Douglas & Vanessa A Chirichiello, Betzabet Ascencio, $770,000, 227 Osgood St

Robert & Alison Naftal, Christopher J & Janine Bourque, $750,000, 386 Sharpners Pond Rd

Patrick Kelley & Katrice Jalbert, Wilson Wanjigi & Hellen Mbuthia, $730,000, 31-33 Upland St Unit 2

Mariann Tadmor Est & Yoav Tadmor, Heather L Davis & Paul J Collins, $715,000, 6 Peterson Rd

Kathleen Rohde, Mark & Lisa Schruender, $700,000, 54 Davis St

Mark J Hamel & Barbara L Roche, Justin Gaudino & Alexa Matthews, $665,000, 36 Sylvan Terr

Tung & Courtney Pham, Niccholas & Erin Waszczuk, $635,000, 544 Foster St

Allisa M Rudden/Allisa Rudden, Elizabeth G Wanyoike & David W Mungai, $634,000, 68 Meadowood Rd

Emily P Doherty Tr & Emily Doherty Trust, Cindy A Crownshield & Carol A G Crownshield, $622,000, 303 Hillside Rd

Christopher F & Taylor Sarno, Francisca Betania Gonell & Ronny Vasquez Gonell, $550,000, 96 Second St

Linda D Spence, Sarah Morrow, $500,000, 43 Millpond

Mark E Kolenski, Kelsey Fitzsimmons, $485,000, 125 Phillips Brooks Rd

Xiaopu Jin, Cynthia A Smith & Sandra M Fitzgerald, $435,000, 180 Chickering Rd Unit 108C

Karen Higgins & Virginia F Henderson Est/ Virginia Henderson Est, Muise Family LLC, $431,000, 180 Chickering Rd Unit 107C

Peter J Cheever, Sruthi Chernadi & Arvind Thakkalapalli, $420,000, 64 Kingston St Unit 64

Pamela Joyce Carlson, Richard & Kelly Lynn Peters, $400,000, 27 Bacon Ave

Marilyn Schulman & Sherry Comerchero & Lloyd C Rosenberg, Carley Stewart, $360,000, 148 Main St Unit A-106

Geraldine Murphy, Katelyn A Zolman, $330,500, 38 Edgelawn Ave Unit 38-EL 9

Donald Richardson Jr Tr & David Richardson Tr & Marilyn F Richardson Revocable Trust-2015, Silvija Aprans, $316,000, 47 Edgelawn Ave Unit 7

Lee & Kelly Trimarchi, Joerge & William Joergensen & Timothy Porter, $300,000, 7 Fernview Ave Unit 7FV-7

Mark J Hamel & Barbara L Roche, Cherry Properties LLC, $281,000, 20 Sylvan Ter

Yi Xuan Le, Michael A Russo Jr, $260,000, 10A Union St

Welerson Bruno De Almeida/Welerson Bruma De Almeida, Charles Faria Cunha Jr & Fernanda Cunha, $194,000, 90 Edgelawn Ave Unit 5

James M Xenakis, Mauricio Lisboa, $179,400.61, 36 Bunkerhill St Unit 36

THE DOCTOR IS IN!

Staying Together

Dr. Pierre Ghassibi
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Me: Hadaa, say this again, please. I have never heard of it before.

Hadaa: There is so much divorce, so many associates" dissociate", and many coworkers find that they cannot work together. The situation is everywhere. It is very often not life itself that causes unhappiness, but relationship problems. It is the" Tower of Babel".

We need to avoid this Tower of Babel if we want to be happy. I have even met people who hated their parents. A two year old has pride and insulting them does not get forgotten.

I think that the solution is for us to treat each other with a lot of deference. Yet, spouses and colleagues irritate us because their ways are different from ours, their thinking, their feelings, are different. They also have their idiosyncrasies; but so do we! Remember that men are from Mars and women from Venus.

Perhaps snapping at others, offending, showing angry disapproval can be avoided. We can always maintain great civility in our interactions, even if we totally disagree. How do we know who is wrong and who is right? Each one of us adamantly believes that we are right and the other is wrong. Wars have caused so much misery in our history. Time to stop.

Life is not tailored to our measurements. We have, to a certain extent, to accept and accept and accept. Peace is far more important than getting our way. Anger, jealousy, and hostilities are poisoning our life and yet, they are embedded in our nature. Accept Nature, or if we want happiness, then we have to disobey Nature. This is enlightenment.

I have witnessed in zoos hyenas and even crocodiles fall in love with the humans who raised them, not only lions and tigers do. Our parents are more important to us than ourselves. They are our soul more than our own soul. They are our umbilical cord, our history. This is why a spouse has to have a lot of respect for the in-laws. Your wife can criticize her parents, but you should not. Treat both her and her parents with extreme respect if you want to be a winner. The Law of Attraction says that if we want respect and love, we have to give respect and love. Love your wife's family more than you love her if you want her extreme devotion and respect. I will not discuss exceptions, which can be real. But do accept and accept and accept. Wanting life only our way is selfishness. Nature created us selfish. If we want to be happy and enjoy life, we have to disobey Nature! Why do we poison the waters that we need to quench our thirst?

HERO: FROM PAGE 1

the war for a second tour. This time at U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield, around 88 miles southeast of Bangkok and near the coast. One of his fond memories of serving our Nation was seeing Bob Hope in a USO show in a performance that was disturbed by a B52 Bomber taking off every thirty minutes to support ground troops in Vietnam. Bob Hope's USO show, in Guy's own words, "It was an actual thrill to see Bob Hope in person and enjoy his quick-witted comments and jokes. It was a special day out of the year, a great temporary distraction. Among his troupe was guitarist Tony Romano, singer Frances Langford, dancer Patty Thomas, and comedian Barney Dean." During both tours, Guy bonded with his Air Force Brothers, eating, sleeping, drinking, working, and serving together.

His other great memory was an R&R, (time off for rest and relation) in northern Thailand exploring the beautiful city of Chiang Mai. The city is famous for its rich culture, stunning temples, and endless natural beauty. Chiang Mai is also known for the area's relaxed lifestyle and low cost of living. From the bustling night markets and street food vendors to the serene Buddhist temples and ancient ruins, Chiang Mai offers something for everyone. Guy enjoyed exploring the city, taking in its stunning landscapes, and sampling delicious street food, of Northern Thailand.

He ended his US Air Force service as a Staff Sargent, serving from 1968 to 1972. He remarked that several of his classmates at Lawrence High also served, with one man, Brian Cronin, being tragically killed in a jeep accident while serving with the US Navy in North Africa. His military awards include, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service medal with two service stars, (two tours in the air campaign) the Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the US Air Force Good Conduct Medal. He also is authorized to wear the US Air Force Outstanding Unit Ribbon with Oak Leaf Cluster (two awards).

While serving in the military, he became engaged to his wife, Denise, in 1972. Shortly after his engagement to his wife, he was honorably discharged at Travis AFB in California. On July 2nd, he, and his wife Denise, celebrated fifty-one years of marriage. The couple have a son, a daughter, and three grandsons. Typical of Merrimack Valley people, Guy and his wife Denise worked hard, supporting their family. He worked as a Service Station Manager alongside his brother-in-law for thirty-five years, later working at Butcher Boy, and retiring from the North Andover Public School's maintenance department. Denise was a career LPN. Both retired now, they spend their free time with family, as much as possible. He and Denise make their home in Dracut, Massachusetts.

Guy also is very involved in assisting veterans of all eras and branches with his volunteer work with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Clear Path for Veterans, a peer to peer, Veterans mentoring organization. In Guy's own words, "As commander of VFW Post 8349 in Methuen, for just over a month now, I'm trying to get my bearings. It's an honor and I am more than happy to serve. There are some goals I would like to achieve, hopefully for the better of the post and my brother and sister veterans. Some of our VFW goals are awarding more youth scholarships, increasing

membership; especially with younger vets, also assisting comrades in distress."

Guy is also on the dynamic team affiliated with the Lawrence Vietnam Memorial. He shared with the Valley Patriot, "In 1991, my long time and great friend, Ed Hoppy Curran was able, with the help of a few others, to have a monument erected honoring the eighteen men from Lawrence who were casualties of Vietnam. After having the privilege of taking part in the dedication ceremony, I suggested we do something to keep their memory alive, and so in 1992, we had a cabaret and a raffle fundraiser. Thirty-one years later, (we lost two years because of COVID) we have awarded thousands of dollars to well over one hundred students going on to college in their memory. A great achievement we thought would be difficult to accomplish, but not so because of our generous following and our raffle donors."

He sees a real need for all eligible Veterans to join a Veteran's services organization such as the VFW, the American Legion, or the American Veterans (Am Vets). These three organizations are dedicated to supporting the health care, housing, education, employment, and social needs of all our Nation's Veterans. US Air Force jet mechanic, veterans advocate, husband, father, Guy Curtis

triot, "Hero in Our

Valley's American all World War II, Vietnam War Veterans, 5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC! Veterans of all eras are asked to go the American Legion's Web site www.legion.org, and join the American Legion, our mission is working with Congress, Veterans, and the Community, preserving our Veteran's Benefits for future generations and serving all Veterans and their families.

John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the US Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus using the GI Bill. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 26 years. If you know a World War II, Korean War, or Vietnam War Veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com ◊

SUE PIAZZA'S BOOK REVIEW

HIDDEN MEDALLION:

Return of the Elementals-Book 2

By: A.R. Nitus © 2023 A.R. Nitus
Nitus Book Publishing July 2023:
GENRE: Young Adult, Fantasy
Bookmarkers: 4 of 5
Advanced Reader Copy

This is the 2nd book, in the Return of the Elemental series. If you like an adventure book with a dash of magic in your sci-fi, and a strong female lead, this book is for you.

Astra, a teen, is different; her abilities make her so. Her family was different. So different that her parents, branded as traitors, disappear. Astra's life journey becomes a quest to learn about her parents and uncover the truth about the people controlling her world. Defeat is not in her vocabulary.

She joins up with similarly powerful friends. This group battles priests and the brain washing they inflicted upon the people in her world. The priest's influence is so severe and all-encompassing that even she, at times, struggles to accept her own reality. Attempting to uncover the secret to the realm she inhabits, she is blamed for a destroyed portal and is deemed a fugitive.

Astra and her friends learn how to control their powers under various conditions in a multitude of situations. The tension generated between the segments of diverse worlds builds seamlessly and holds the reader's attention. Magical powers, crystal explosions, elementals, and monsters merge to create a backdrop for Astra's real-life problems— plots, betrayals, love interests, and the overwhelming need for truth to be revealed. These well-developed characters and their lives are told in an original sci-fi setting.

Just when you think no more original sci-fi stories exist, a first-time author, A.R. Nitus, reveals a new plotline.

I'm sure we've all read fantasy books that are so complicated with so many characters and such a convoluted plot line that after reading the book one still has no idea how to describe it. This is not the case with this dystopian thriller. I enjoyed both this book and Book One "Shadow Island: Return of the Elementals".

I would recommend this thoroughly engaging story.

Susan Piazza, a Navy veteran, is an author, columnist, and blogger. Book One in her Ongoing Indigenous Tales series, the interracial romance, "A Bird Call That Isn't" can be found on Amazon at:

A Bird Call That Isn't: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0829MHLRX

Her new book, Destiny's Daughter, Book 2 in this series will be out soon.

Tom Duggan's BEST DISH Reccomendation of the MONTH!

Lamb Chop Dinner at SevMar Mediterranean Bistro in Salem, NH

SevMarBistroNH.com

TV TALK with BILL CUSHING

"Hijack"

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

The friendly skies aren't so friendly in the new Apple TV+ series 'Hijack,' a gripping '24'-ish thriller that may seem like an unnerving choice for the height of summer's travel season. But, for those staying grounded, however, this is a winner, and it's my recommendation for this month.

'Hijack' follows a group of passengers trying to survive a hijacking as it unfolds in real-time with each episode covering about an hour of a 7-hour flight from Dubai to London.

The passengers are led by the self-appointed leader Sam Nelson, played masterfully by Idris Elba. Sam is a skilled business negotiator who, instead of trying to become a hero, offers to work with the bad guys to execute and achieve their mission without any casualties.

He speaks slowly with purpose, convincing the hijackers that he's an asset while secretly working strategies in a fascinating game of mental chess with lead hijacker Stuart (Neil Haskell). The ongoing battle of wits between these two are some of the best and most intense scenes in the series.

The show also makes slick and skilled use of its main setting, but it isn't a one-location-only affair. We're also introduced to people on the ground across several countries, all attempting to work out what's going on. Among those we meet are Sam's estranged wife Marsha and their son Kai.

Marsha asks her new cop boyfriend Daniel to investigate after she receives a cryptic text from Sam. He enlists British counter-terrorism through his ex-partner Zahra Gahfoor (Archie Panjabi), while various others, including the British government, slowly realize the plane has been taken hostage and scramble to respond.

By presenting an hour of the ordeal per episode, 'Hijack' gets its audience experiencing the stress, chaos, and life-or-death stakes in tandem with Sam and the rest of the flight's hostages.

Hijack is also a visually impressive presentation, thanks to its outstanding cinematography and top-notch production design. The meticulous attention to detail in capturing the confined space of the plane, combined with the claustrophobic atmosphere, further intensifies the sense of danger.

Co-creators George Kay and Jim Field Smith craft their story with precision, letting the tension build slowly and deliberately until it becomes uncomfortably intense. They allow the series to unfold perfectly. Building suspense, releasing it, and building it again. With a little more intensity each time.

We've seen stories like this before, of course, but the quality of the execution here sets it apart. The hijackers' motivations are murky at first, giving us a mystery to unravel as the episodes go on, but the danger they present is very real.

Most of the characters are smart, too, which is a refreshing change; no one makes dumb decisions simply as a cheap way to propel the plot forward. Plus, the premiere ends with an intriguing twist that forces us to question who exactly is the bad guy.

The series is primarily designed to deliver a fun, exciting, entertaining watch — and it does that. It's relentless in its action and drama. A heart-racing watch from start to finish.

'Hijack' is available to stream on AppleTV +.

If you have any questions about TV, you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column. Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion. ◊

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The Art of Conversation!

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Almost everything in life begins and ends with a conversation. Having a conversation is a talk, especially an informal one, between two or more people, in which news and ideas are exchanged, it's interactive communication! The development of conversational skills is an important part of socialization. Conversations can also take place with yourself, i.e., talking to yourself. Some of my best conversations are with myself, it's how I process information and answer questions that are asked of me. I wish I could quickly go through this process, but unfortunately, I don't.

The Bible is full of fascinating conversations that bring about an array of emotions, some leading to exciting victories and celebrations, some to devastation and defeat. Three conversations in the Bible have always caught my attention that I want to share with you in this column.

The first conversation is between Jesus and a paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda. We read about this in John 5:2-9. We pick up the conversation in verse 5, "Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" 7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." 8 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." 9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked." NKJV.

What intrigued me about this conversation is why would Jesus begin with a question to a man who has been paralyzed for thirty-eight years and is at a place one goes for healing, and asks him, "Do you want to be made well?" Then the infirm man answers the question by not answering the question asked of him! Jesus was looking for a simple yes or no but got a song and dance instead! Or maybe this was the man's way of processing the question along with wondering who it was who asked the question? As we read the man only needed Jesus and not the pool to be made totally well.

The next conversation that has always intrigued me was again between Jesus and two disciples on Resurrection Sunday which we can read in Luke 24:13-27. Here we have 2 sad followers of Jesus walking 7 miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They just went through three horrific days of Jesus' torture, death, and burial and now this morning they find out that His body is now missing from its tomb with some saying He is alive! But they are very disappointed because they thought that Jesus was going to overthrow the Romans and begin a new Kingdom and be their new King, but that wasn't what happened, not even close. So, as they were walking Jesus shows up and they are restrained from recognizing Him and Jesus asks, what's up? Why are you so sad? They responded by asking Jesus how can he not know what is going on unless maybe he was a stranger in town. Then they proceeded to tell Him their story and Jesus' response is, in Luke 24:25-27, "Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." NKJV. By the end of the conversation, they arrived at the city of Emmaus and they invited Jesus into their home where they had Holy Communion together when Jesus Blessed the bread, Jesus was made known to them and He vanished. Immediately, they went back 7 miles to Jerusalem to tell the others what happened. This has got to be the GOAT, The Greatest of All Time conversations which when I get to Heaven, I am either streamlining or checking out the DVD. Imagine Jesus Himself teaching Scriptures that pertained to Him!

The third conversation in the Bible that has my attention is found in Acts 8:26-39. This talk is between Phillip the Evangelist and the man from Ethiopia. When Phillip shows up on the scene, The Ethiopian man is sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah and Phillip asks, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The response from the Ethiopian man was, "How can I unless someone guides me?" Phillip's answer to that is found in Acts 8:35, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him." NKJV. By the end of the conversation, we read in Acts 8:36-37, "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" 37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." NKJV. The Ethiopian had his life changed!

All three conversations in one way or another involved Jesus! Jesus was all the paralyzed man needed to be made well. Jesus on Resurrection Sunday teaches only 2 of his disheartened followers Scripture concerning Himself. Lastly, we have Phillip the Evangelist talking to a Non-Believer, and takes the Ethiopian through Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ and brings him from death to Everlasting life!!!

If any of you who are reading this column need Jesus to heal you or need to quench your thirst to know Him, send me an email to peterlarocque@hotmail.com or text me at 978-387-2858 and we will have a conversation.

God Bless you!

Peter Larocque

PS. Please let me know if you are responding to this column. ◊

PAYANO FROM PAGE 5

school districts are equipped with the necessary resources to offer high-quality educational opportunities to their students. By prioritizing education funding, we aim to enhance learning outcomes and provide every child in Massachusetts with a strong foundation for their future success.

FUNDING FOR NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS - The budget prioritizes education infrastructure with a dedicated $100 million allocation to support the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). This funding aims to assist cities, towns, and school districts grappling with extraordinary school project costs intensified by post-COVID inflationary pressures. In addition to this substantial investment, we have taken a proactive step by increasing the statutory limit for estimated grants approved by the MSBA to $1.2 billion. This critical adjustment empowers schools that had signed MSBA project contracts before the pandemic, as well as those currently progressing towards contract signing, to effectively address construction costs impacted by inflation. Our commitment to enhancing school facilities reflects our dedication to providing the best possible learning environments for our students and educators alike. Two schools in the district will benefit from this investment the Oliver and Leahy School in Lawrence.

INVESTING IN HIGHER ED - We made a significant investment of $50 million to accelerate and strengthen the support for free community college education across all campuses, with the goal of implementing this program by fall of 2024. We showed a commitment to making quality higher education more accessible and affordable for all, fostering a skilled and educated workforce that will drive our state's progress and prosperity. The allocation includes:

• $20 million dedicated to MassReconnect, which marks the initial step toward providing free community college access for individuals aged 25 and older. This initiative aims to expand educational opportunities and workforce development prospects for adult learners.

• An additional $18 million is designated for a free community college pilot program focused on nursing students. By prioritizing this in-demand workforce area, we are investing in the future of our healthcare sector while moving closer to achieving universal free community college access by the fall of 2024. To enhance the availability of qualified nurses, the FY24 budget adopts proactive measures, directing the Board of Registration in Nursing to permit experienced nurses with a baccalaureate degree to serve as course instructors.

• Furthermore, we have set aside $12 million for the implementation support of free community college. This funding will be utilized to gather essential data, develop best practices, and enhance capacity-building efforts to ensure a seamless rollout of the program by fall 2024.

EARLY EDUCATION & CARE - In a significant milestone, the FY24 budget designates a groundbreaking $475 million for Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) grants, providing full-year funding for the first time and underscoring our historic dedication to early education and care. These direct-to-provider grants empower childcare providers to invest in staff compensation, preventing program closures and safeguarding crucial services for our communities.

Additionally, the budget allocates $85 million for rate increases for subsidized childcare providers and dedicates $17.5 million to Head Start grants, reinforcing our commitment to early childhood education. A historic $1.5 billion investment marks the most substantial annual appropriation in Massachusetts' history, ensuring access to high-quality programs that empower children to thrive in school and beyond. This commitment lays the foundation for a brighter future, supporting the well-being and development of our youngest learners.

FOCUS ON WORFORCE - We allocated $25 million to prioritize workforce development and address the pressing challenges facing our Commonwealth. This expansion aims to incentivize degree completion in disciplines crucial to meeting our workforce demands. The financial assistance will support students pursuing graduate, undergraduate, or certificate programs in high-demand professions at public institutions of higher education.

In exchange for this financial aid, recipients commit to working in an in-demand industry within Massachusetts for a period of five years after graduation. By fostering this skilled workforce, we are nurturing talent that will contribute significantly to the growth and success of our state's economy, creating a stronger and more vibrant workforce for the future. This initiative aligns with our vision to bolster the workforce and ensure the continued prosperity of Massachusetts.

LOCAL AID

The FY24 Budget reinforces the Legislature's commitment to state-local partnerships, providing substantial resources tailored to meet the diverse needs of communities throughout the Commonwealth. It allocates $1.27 billion in funding for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), marking a $39.4 million increase from FY 2023 to further bolster resources for cities and towns.

Additionally, the budget dedicates $47.3 million to support libraries, with $16.9 million allocated for regional library local aid, $17.6 million for municipal libraries, and $6.2 million for technology and automated resource networks.

These investments underscore the importance of enhancing library services and accessibility, empowering communities with valuable knowledge and resources.

Overall, the FY24 Budget stands as a testament to the Legislature's proactive efforts in fostering strong partnerships with local governments and enhancing vital services for the benefit of residents across the state.

CHAPTER 70 FUNDS
(state aid to K-12 public schools)

• Haverhill: $82,633,811 (increase of $8,727,501)

• Lawrence: $266,144,831 (increase of $25,438,040)

• Methuen: $64,681,414 (increase of $8,080,389)

UNRESTRICTED LOCAL AID

• Haverhill $11,749,375 (increase of $364,322)

• Lawrence $23,472,453 (increase of $727,828)

• Methuen $6,499,916 (increase of $201,548)

TRANSPORTATION

The FY24 budget includes significant investments in transportation infrastructure and services across Massachusetts. These investments will enhance mobility, safety, and accessibility for residents and visitors throughout Massachusetts, contributing to the state's overall economic growth and prosperity.

MBTA - A total of $201 million has been allocated for Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) capital projects and to address ongoing safety concerns and improve the efficiency of the MBTA system. $5 million was also allocated to explore the feasibility of implementing a means-tested fare program at the MBTA.

ROADS & BRIDGES - $100 million in supplemental aid is earmarked for roads and bridges, with half of the funds to be expended consistent with the Chapter 90 program and the other half focused on the total mileage of participating municipalities.

RTA - The budget provides $90 million for regional transit funding and grants, aimed at supporting the work of Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) like the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority. This allocation more than doubles the total funding for RTAs to $184 million, ensuring improved accessibility and connectivity in various regions of the state.

HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH & FAMILY CARE

The FY24 budget makes significant strides in protecting and expanding access to healthcare services in Massachusetts. Investments in the FY24 budget will allow more than 2 million people to receive affordable, accessible, and comprehensive health care services.

It codifies the federal Affordable Care Act's provisions safeguarding access to preventive services like cancer screenings and HIV preventive medications.

This action ensures that insurance carriers across the state must offer coverage for these services without imposing cost-sharing, such as co-pays and deductibles, benefiting countless residents.

The budget also addresses MassHealth redetermination with a two-year ConnectorCare expansion pilot program, making coverage more accessible to individuals up to 500 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit (about $73,000 annually for an individual). This expansion will extend affordable coverage to approximately 47,000 to 70,000 previously ineligible residents, providing them with more options and easing their transition off MassHealth. The FY24 budget allocates $19.81 billion to MassHealth, representing the largest investment ever made in the state's budget for healthcare.

Recognizing the importance of addressing stroke as a leading cause of long-term disability and death, the FY24 budget directs the Department of Public Health (DPH) to establish a comprehensive system of stroke response and care. This initiative aims to ensure that patients receive urgent care promptly and efficiently.

The budget incorporates provisions to codify Operation House Call, which establishes standards for the treatment and care of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It also sets forth a certified training program for students pursuing healthcare professions, promoting better care, and understanding for this vulnerable population.

To address the ongoing substance, use disorder crisis, the budget dedicates $213.3 million for a comprehensive range of treatment and intervention services. Children's mental health services receive $119.8 million in funding, ensuring vital support for young individuals in need. Furthermore, Early Intervention (EI) services receive $42.9 million to maintain accessibility and availability for infants and young toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities.

To strengthen mental health resources and programming for families, the budget provides $33.8 million for Family Resource Centers (FRCs). Moreover, it allocates $26.3 million to local Councils on Aging to increase assistance per elder enhancing support for the elderly population.

HOUSING

The FY24 budget makes a historic $1.05 billion investment in housing, aiming to address housing stability, residential assistance, and homelessness challenges.

Recognizing the ongoing impact of the pandemic and financial insecurity, the budget provides significant relief to families and individuals. This includes $324 million for Emergency Assistance family shelters and $190 million for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT), offering rental assistance of up to $7,000 per household.

The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) receives $180 million, leading to the creation of over 750 new vouchers and enabling the program to adopt a payment standard with a benefit of 110 per cent of the federal small-area fair market rental price. This expansion will greatly enhance housing options for program beneficiaries. Additionally, $110.8 million is allocated for assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Furthermore, the FY24 budget makes a crucial move by permanently establishing eviction protection for renters with pending applications for emergency rental assistance under RAFT or any other program administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), municipalities, or nonprofit entities. This protection ensures that a judge cannot execute an eviction before an emergency rental assistance application has been approved or denied, safeguarding vulnerable renters during the application process.

With these substantial investments and protections, the FY24 budget demonstrates a strong commitment to address housing challenges and promote stability for individuals and families across the state.

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